

EASTERN EXPERIENCES.

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EASTERN EXPERIENCES

COLLECTED

DURING A WINTER'S TOUR

IN

EGYPT AND THE HOLY
LAND.

BY

ADAM STEINMETZ KENNARD.

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EASTERN EXPERIENCES.

CHAPTER I.

MALTA.

IF English literature numbered amongst its curiosities a book entitled “Grammar on Times and Seasons,” that book would, beyond all doubt, lay it down as a rule that such phrases as “a warm sun,” “a cloudless sky,” “thermometer at 70° in the shade,” agreed in gender, number, and case with the word *June*, and would furthermore refer the student in versification to his “Gradus ad Parnassum” for such epithets as “bitterly cold,” “sunless,” “thermometer below zero,” to be used in connection with the word *December*.

the past;—times about which in the mind of every Englishman there floats, I am persuaded, a myth as to their having been essentially good—one had to succumb to these rules, and to listen with wonder, akin to doubt, to those few travellers who talked about southern suns and azure skies at a time when we heaped logs on to our Christmas fires, listening to the wind as it roared in the chimney, or to the vibration of our window lattices as we crept shivering into bed. Fortunately for us who have nothing to do with those *good old times*, and who find ourselves struggling to be happy in these days of steamboats, railways, and sixpenny cabs, we have but as it were to take a short preparatory canter, to find ourselves freed from all those rules which fettered our ancestors, and rejoicing in turn-down collars and white felt wide-awakes, whilst our friends in England are skating on the Serpentine, or warming their toes with the handles of their hunting whips, as they listen for the “gone away” at cover-side. Towards the close of November, and at that happy age when a man is pronounced too young for the serious business of life, and too old for anything short of it, I set my face, by way of Marseilles and Malta, towards the sun-rising; in other words, I left London, sincerely trusting to find myself at the ex-

piration of a few weeks in Egypt and the romantic East.

England was literally under water when I bade its white cliffs adieu ; and a Venetian standing in the Abingdon Road might have mistaken Oxford for his native sea-girt city, so extensive were the floods about it ; nor was it until I had nearly reached Marseilles that I caught a glimpse of the sweet South.

It was raining when I landed at Boulogne : the same shower accompanied me to Paris, and drove with me along the Rue de la Paix to my hotel. It might have ceased during part of the few hours that I remained in the French capital, but had certainly commenced again with renewed vigour when I left by the night train for Chalons.

At five o'clock the next morning I might have been seen standing in the rain on the quai at Chalons, quite sorry to find that the floods had rendered steam navigation on the Saone out of the question. A large bustling sort of a place is the Hotel de Parc ; however, it managed to supply me with coffee and cold chicken, and over this I pondered as to what to do under existing circumstances.

The steamer which was to convey me to Malta left Marseilles on the morning of the 4th of December, so that it was natural in me to entertain the wish to

be at the last-named placed by the 3rd, in order to catch it. Of course the only thing to be done was to post: then as to the conveyance — could I have a carriage?

I had hardly thrown out the question when I was accosted by a French gentleman, who, informing me that he was about to start for Lyons in a carriage capable of holding more than one, offered me a seat on condition of my sharing the expense. With this well-timed proposal I immediately closed, and half an hour afterwards was being “whirrpped” along the road to Lyons by a French post-boy in a pair of boots.

Ten minutes of our journey had hardly passed when we were overtaken by Lord Brougham in a carriage and four on his way to Cannes; but as it is not the *ton* in French road etiquette for one poster to pass another on the road, we were in company all day, dining and supping together in the quaint back kitchens of the different posting houses.

After travelling in a drenching rain from seven in the morning till eight at night, we found ourselves at the small town of Villefranche (exactly three posts from the object of our affections — Lyons), and compelled to stop for the night, as there was not a horse to be had for love or money; so I made the best of it in a most questionable hotel, and after a night cold

and dreary, spent between the sheets of a tiny little bed, in one corner of a vast bedroom from the ceiling of which, in many parts, the rain dripped through on to the worm-eaten boards, I turned out before daybreak, and was off with my Gallic friend for Lyons, leaving Lord Brougham still asleep in the half-ruined auberge of Villefranche.

Steaming all day down the magnificent Rhone, I gradually crept out of the rain ; and surmounting the terrors of the well-known Pont de Saint Esprit*, and passing scatheless through the hands of those harpies, the porters of Avignon, I stepped into southern sunshine at Marseilles.

At six o'clock on the morning of December 4th I went on board the French steamer *Caire*, and was soon after steaming out to sea past the Quarantine Islands. It was lovely as a June day in England, and already were the blue waters of the Mediterranean being danced over by those white-winged beautiful feluccas, which looked so fairy-like as they bent to the morning breeze, that one could hardly believe they were nothing more nor less than fishing-

* The Pont de Saint Esprit is an old bridge over the Rhone, a little below Valence, through which the river rushes with fearful velocity, causing the traveller just one anxious moment as he is carried along, the paddle-boxes of the steamer seeming almost to touch the stone piers on either side.

smacks: however, so it was; but as our paddles went round so went we away, and soon the white sails fluttered and sparkled in the far distance like broken tops of waves.

The next morning at sunrise saw us steaming through the Straits of Bonifacio; and basking all that day and the next in the southern heat of a December sun, we made fast to our moorings in the quarantine harbour of Malta at five o'clock on the morning of the 7th. The first glimpse of the East is caught at Malta: you bid adieu to Europe at Marseilles, but lest the change from hats and carriages to turbans and camels should be too sudden by landing directly in Alexandria, you are enabled to let yourself gently down by stopping for a few days at Malta.

As I stood on the deck of the *Caire* preparatory to landing, gazing round the magnificent harbour, I found something to interest me at every point. Looking towards the Lazaretto my eye was first arrested by groups of swarthy Arabs, ranged, blue-breeched and turbaned, into lines on the steps of the port, deep in their matutinal devotions. Everywhere were to be seen forts, churches, domes, and long lines of low flat-roofed houses, all built in the white Maltese stone. Not a blade of any green thing gave relief to the eye from the glare, which

was excessive. Boats without number were darting about in all directions; bells of all sizes were tolling, ringing, and clanging from every conceivable quarter; and every one seemed in the best possible spirits. I now landed, and wound my way up into the town through noisy groups of English, Italian, and Maltese sailors, under gateways, across drawbridges, up steps, and through subterranean passages hewn out of the solid rock, and at length found myself in the Strada San Paolo, where some friends, who had kindly offered to receive me during my stay in the island, resided.

So many and detailed have been the descriptions of our little Mediterranean fortress, that I refrain from expatiating on a subject about which I doubt not that most of my readers are quite as well, if not better, informed than I am: and again, as I intend the pages of which this volume is composed to be devoted entirely to the East, I might be accused of duplicity, or at any rate injustice, if I started with a lengthy description of any place that was not *bond fide* Eastern.

The time that I omitted to spend in Valetta, the capital town, I employed in watching the troops on parade at Florian, rides along the sea-shore to San Julian, or in country walks — a term, by the way,

which lacks a due regard to truth; for so totally devoid of anything like country is Malta, that I remember when, on my arrival, as I stood on the deck of the *Caire*, gazing on the scene around me, my eye was caught by what appeared to me an immensely high dead wall, I concluded that it was a prison or something of that kind; but, as an obsequious *domestique de place* was at that moment tendering me his services, I turned to him for an explanation, and the following little dialogue took place, the result of which, I am afraid, considerably lowered me in the estimation of the worthy Maltese. Pointing with my finger to the object in question, I inquired the name of that rather unsightly building. "What building, Sir? I see no building." "Why, that building," said I, "right in front; it's big enough." The poor fellow looked really disgusted with me, as turning away he said, "Why Sir, those are potato fields, and no buildings at all." Now it may seem that some most extraordinary mirage was at work in my brain, for me to build a second Millbank penitentiary out of a potato field: but the fact was, that it was a field made out of a number of stone terraces, one above another; and as there was no green visible at the distance at which I stood, they presented to me the appearance of a high blank wall, which accounts for my little mistake.

CHAP. II.

ALEXANDRIA.

I WAS standing one morning in the bows of the steamer which had brought me from Malta, gazing upon what I considered a boundless waste of waters, when "Land a-head!" was shouted from the foretop, and, soon after, bringing my eyes to bear in the direction of the bowsprit-end, I saw, to my astonishment, a column rise up out of the sea, and stand on the horizon, hardly marked against the liquid sky. Soon after, swarms of windmills emerged from the same watery bed, establishing for themselves a position on its right; then gradually on the extreme left rose the Pasha's palace and lofty hareem; gleaming sand-banks soon filled up the intervals; and the whole was pointed out to me as the important city of Alexandria;—the above-mentioned column being designated as Pompey's Pillar.

And now behold us at anchor in the Egyptian port! the steamer enveloped by a perfect cloud of

small boats, in each a couple of demi-nude bronzed Arabs, more clamorous than all the cabmen in London for fares ; nor was the hubbub much less on board — every one preparing to be off, and rushing frantically about, utterly regardless of any one or anything else in this wide world, save “self and luggage.” Piles and piles of black tin boxes, containing the mails, and labelled “INDIA,” lay heaped about everywhere, rendering it almost impossible for one to walk two feet in a straight line in any direction. However, this was all fun to me : I had naught to care for but a small portmanteau, and of this I had possessed myself long before the “tug of war” commenced ; and, selfish as it may seem, I must confess that the scene before me afforded me no little amusement.

Another five minutes, and I was actually standing in the land of Egypt ! No matter what my feelings were, I had no time then for dreams, which would surely have uplifted me from the 19th century, and have plunged me deep into ages long since rolled by. I had stepped out of an Arab boat, and had placed my foot, it is true, on Egyptian ground ; but, seeing that I was in the dominions of Abbas Pasha’s custom-house, not all the Pharaohs, nor all the mighty Alexanders, nor all the Haroun-el-Rasheeds, that

had ever graced the pages of history, would have broken through the regulations of this establishment: and yet it is too bad of me to speak thus. — The Egyptian custom-house is not such a dragon as my words would seem to imply; for though, may be, the softest and most musical 'tale ever breathed by Persian poet would fail to give it even a favourable opinion of the traveller, a small bucksheesh of ten piastres would render it “yours most obediently,” whether in the matter of your luggage, or your view of things in general. The ordeal passed, I at once issued forth, fully prepared to drink in all the poetry of the Arabian Nights in everything I saw; yet still was that pleasure denied me. Those rose-tinted dreams, in which I had indulged at the moment of my landing — and which had been so cruelly checked by the words “What have you to declare?” — were completely dispelled by an attack made upon me by a swarm of donkey-boys, who, with their long-eared animals, were striving to gain my affections by hook or by crook. To this end there were some half-dozen behind, each one endeavouring to push his own donkey, after the manner of the Irishman’s pig, between my legs, so as to force me to mount without the aid of stirrups; others seemed to think that if they could induce their animals to get their fore-legs into

my waistcoat pockets, the wished for result would be gained: in the outer circle were more, some kicking and some rearing, with a view, I suppose, of showing off their "going" qualities; whilst all other sounds were swallowed up in the multitudinous cries of "I say, master! I the best jackass!"—"This the berry good one!"—"Ride, master! this one five piastres all day." And so the traveller has to mount the nearest, and think himself fortunate if he does not find himself, like one of Astley's heroes, astride of two instead of one; for so pertinacious are they in pushing their donkeys on you, that, even when your choice is made, and you are occupied with putting your foot in the stirrup, another animal is squeezed so close to the one you are already mounting, that having given the right leg its swing, you find yourself *between* two, instead of *on* one.

However, it is a great blessing that this awful confusion cannot last for ever; and after an immense deal of anger and a little patience, one generally finds oneself comfortably settled, at last, in some one of the English or French hotels—or else, as I did, in the house of a friend about a mile out of Alexandria, on the very edge of the desert, and sheltered by a small grove of palm trees, which threw the gently waving shadows of their graceful forms far

along the glowing surface of the sand in the evening
sun.

Never shall I forget the first blush of my first Egyptian morning. Brightly streamed the sun's early rays through those graceful palms that fringe the road down into Alexandria: crisp and rosily cold was the air, as I sauntered about among the prickly pears: and sure am I, that no school boy ever, on the first morning of the much-wished-for Christmas holidays, felt more contented with himself and everything around him than did I, some thousands of miles between me and home, in an only partially civilised country, and surrounded by a people the like of whom I had never seen before. But who could feel otherwise than perfectly happy, whilst breathing for the first time such a climate? Adieu for ever, ye English fogs, ye poisonous London smokes! Be this my lot for the rest of this life! . . . And yet I hardly know! What can be more congenial to an Englishman's mind?

Like a bottle of champagne — (the comparison is a trite one, but I am forced to use it for want of a better) — the act of turning out of bed in Egypt, and throwing open your windows, uncorks you; a run among the palms before breakfast leaves you all excitement and happiness; you feel that you must

do something, or else some part of you will break : nor do you seem to have the least uneasiness as to what that *something* should be—to turn Mussulman and keep a hareem ; to build a pyramid, or write a book on hieroglyphics—you would undertake anything, nor doubt your ability for an instant: the day wears hot and almost sultry, till noon sees you sitting quietly among the divan cushions, a little flat, the gas having almost bubbled away : for a few hours during the afternoon you are again European, the eldest or youngest son, as the case may be, of some unaspiring English family ; or, to continue the simile, like the empty bottle ; but a ride out into the desert at sunset will again send you floating up among the stars, dreaming of a score of wives and pyramids.

I was disappointed with Alexandria ; I had fondly hoped that I had left Europe behind me at Marseilles, and that after landing in Egypt I was to commence my residence for the next six months among mosque-domes and minarets, whiling away the heated hours of the day in long Moorish bazaars, hung with silks from Damascus, and richly-coloured carpets from the looms of Ispahan, breathing an atmosphere laden with the perfumes of otto of roses and all manner of spices ; that I was henceforward

to see nothing but painted arabas containing soft-eyed ladies in lace veils, eunuchs in red jackets on gorgeously caparisoned horses, in charge of the hareems of Pashas; that all men were to be dressed in turbans and flowing robes, and were ever to be seen riding on camels or smoking rose-leaves beneath palm trees—all this I had feasted my imagination with, and indeed had thought it all very possible at the moment of landing, and had looked for the first time on turbans and camels. The most that can be said for Alexandria is, that it is an inferior continental town, its streets peopled with Englishmen, Italians, and Greeks, whose wives dress in bonnets and Paris mantles, and go out shopping in the afternoon in one-horse clarences or pony phactons. Mosques there are, it is true, but being in the back streets are unseen, except by the curious in such matters; there are also bazaars, but they are far from picturesque, and decidedly dirty. As to turbans, I could not but observe a tendency in the people to wind cloths round their heads, but it was a hard race between them and the wearers of hats. I was pleased to see a great many camels, and to observe that there were no trees but palms, no shrubs but prickly pears, and no plants but orange trees and bananas; but on the whole, I thought

Alexandria Eastern only in name, position on the map, and from the fact of its possessing Cleopatra's Needle and Pompey's Pillar, so I took the earliest opportunity of going to Cairo.

Before I went I was introduced to H. H. Saïd Pasha, now the Viceroy of Egypt, at his palace of Gabarra; a solemn and regal half-hour it was that we spent in his Highness' presence, among all such magnificences as were enjoyed by Allah's most favourite caliphs of old—sipping coffee, and extracting soft volumes of the sweet Syrian weed from diamond-circled lumps of amber.

Eight hours' steaming along the Mahmoudich canal brought me to Atfieh, where it flows into the Nile, and which I reached just as the sun was sinking beneath the horizon of the Libyan desert; and for the first time I witnessed a Nile sunset.

Silently leaning against the bulwarks of the vessel, I gazed upon its ever-changing beauties; and when the last roseate tint had melted into a cold grey, I turned away with a feeling of regret, yet rejoicing in the thought that many more such were in store for me, now that, after all my hopes and anticipations, I was at length fairly afloat on the Nile.

At Atfieh we were transferred from our Mahmoudich hulk to one of the Pasha's steamers, but which

was a great deal too small for our passenger complement. Here we were to pass the night, everybody sleeping where he could. Those that were not fortunate in obtaining six feet of sofa, had to put up with the floor; and in this latter and not very enviable position I found myself about midnight, with a well-crammed knotty carpet-bag for a pillow, after having paced the deck since sunset, rejoicing in the silence and purity of an Eastern night. However, I was about to become a traveller -- so I suffered, but made light of it.

This was the eve of the "Dóseh," or fête of Mahomet; and steaming rapidly on, we gained reach after reach of the broad river, at times approaching so near the inland towns, that, borne across the water on the soft breezes of the night, came the distant buzz of mirth from among their illuminated mosques.

As the next day got on, and when we were within a few miles of Cairo — its situation marked by the mountains of the Mokattam, which, from a distance, seem to overhang it — over the intervening desert I caught my first glimpse of the almost everlasting pyramids. So large they loomed through the hazy atmosphere of an African noon, that I fancied they were

quite close, yet two full hours elapsed before we moored among the acacias at Boulac, the port of Cairo.

And now again was I plunged into all the hurry and confusion of crowds of people landing at the same moment. I listened: and Arabic seemed to be the only thing spoken; in fact it assumed the form of "the one thing needful" to one in my position. A dozen turbaned athletic men were around me, tendering me, I doubt not, the kindest offers of assistance, to carry me and all my worldly goods wherever I chose to direct—I only needed to speak. In vain I chinked dollars, and looked rich and generous; they could do nothing for me unless I told them what I wanted—and those wants must be expressed in Arabic. My kind friends were at length gradually dropping off, thinking that nothing was to be made out of me, when, pushing himself through the crowd, a perfect Pasha of a fellow, gloriously apparelled in baggy breeches, an embroidered jacket, and red tarboosh, presented himself, addressing me in about the most powerful English I had ever had the pleasure of hearing even in my own country. He was, in fact, no other than one of that numerous race of men distinguished from the rest of the inhabitants of this earth by the sobriquet of "Dragomen," one of that class to which

belonged Eothen's Dhemetri and Warburton's Mahmoud. But of dragomen anon: I shall have plenty to say of them, so let me not be premature. Suffice it that my friend in the bags transferred me and mine, in a twinkling, to Shepherd's Hotel, nor was he contented with a little.

As I have before observed, this was the Birthday of Mahomet, and the city was filled with pilgrims, the greater part of whom had only this morning made their triumphal entry into Cairo, red-hot from the shrines of Mecca, surrounded with all the tinsel glory of the Mussulman religion, to wit, quantities of funny-looking banners, dancing men and dancing women, an uproarious rabble in masks with most prodigious noses and goggle eyes, all jumping and leaping about to the music of a hundred tomtoms. From all parts of the Mahomedan world had flocked Mussulmen to see, and to participate in, the well-known fête of the "Dósch."

Leaving my luggage to look after itself, I mounted a donkey, and, hurrying away with the stream, I soon found myself at what seemed to be the focus of operations. In such a crowd I trust I may never again be, an almost tropical sun beating down on my head, and half-choked with dust. After waiting some little time, every moment adding to the noise,

dust, and chaos around me, a clear passage was made through the crowd by some half-dozen keepers of the peace, who, passing close to the spot where I stood, with long kurbashes, or hippopotamus-hide whips, dealt pain and anguish wherever they went. Close on their heels, and taking advantage of the space made for them, came leaping along upwards of a hundred frenzied fanatics; who, literally foaming at the mouth, and clapping their hands high over their heads, rent the air with the words of their creed, "Allah, Illah, Allah! Allah hu Akber!" When they arrived opposite to where I stood, they paused, and then, with one accord, threw themselves with their faces on the ground, thus carpeting it for some distance with their bodies. The chief durwéesh then, mounted on a large powerful horse, and preceded by a number of men, some bearing brass rods, some playing on musical instruments, and some clashing small cymbals and beating drums, rode over them, the horse seeming to tread nearly always in the small of the back. When this was over, and whilst some jumped up and ran forward with seeming alacrity, again to prostrate themselves beneath the animal's hoofs, others were left on the ground, or in the arms of their friends, writhing to all appearance with intense pain. I was told that they were merely under the influence of Mahomet's spirit, for that there

had never occurred an instance of a man being in the least degree hurt at the “Dóseh.” The rest of the day is then spent in the Sheikh’s house, where, not only do they feast upon the good things of this life, but even, maddened with their religion, devour poisonous serpents, and in some cases go so far as to attempt the digesting of plates and glass lamps.

If I remember right, Mr. Lane, in his book on the Modern Egyptians, tells a story of a durwéesh, who was so religious that he became quite an item in the public expenditure: he consumed so much glass and crockery promiscuously about,—sometimes this man’s lamps, and sometimes that man’s plates,—that it was voted too much of a good thing: so the Chancellor of the Egyptian Exchequer sent for him, and advising him to have done with religion till his fancy for crockery should have died out, bade him find sureties for a term of months for respecting other people’s property. As long as the sureties existed the durwéesh made a retrograde movement in the scale of morality, and lived like other sinners upon mutton; but in course of time the calls of religion became too strong, and having once more endangered his life by swallowing a coffee-cup, he was thrown into prison, there to bewail his too devout adherence to the Mussulman creed.

CHAP. III.

CAIRO.

AND now adieu to Europe, for, being at Cairo, I felt myself at length in the East. Among the brilliantly attired crowds that streamed all day along the scented bazaars, it is true that I met with many hats; and though I often remarked that the long strings of sleepy camels were broken by the carriages of Europeans, I eschewed the fact of their being residents, and regarded them but as visitors like myself.

Among the Alexandrian palms I had but, as it were, been reading the preface to the Arabian Nights, the words of a man who sitting at home in Europe was merely telling me what I was about to see; but here among Cairene bazaars I had commenced chapter one of the book itself, and I only left the dining-room of Shepherd's Hotel the more clearly to understand what I was reading about.

Walking across the Esbekeeyah, a large open

space opposite the hotel, serving as a public garden, filled with leafy acacias which shelter numberless coffee-shops, I strolled through the mosqué or Frank bazaar; then diving deeper still into the atmosphere of Oriental romance, I mingled with the turbaned throng that filled the Turkish bazaar.

Seated quietly on the divan of a seller of fine stuffs, smoking his best pipe and sipping the coffee with which he supplied me, I chatted and bargained for nearly an hour in the most perfect state of happiness, complacently watching the gay crowd that was ever streaming this way and that way beneath me. Allowing my imagination full play, I saw caliphs in disguise, listening to the conversation of their innocent subjects; took particular note of the whole intrigue going on over the way, between Schemselnihar and the Prince of Persia, assisted by the jeweller and the female slave; whilst in the next house to where I was sitting, a coffee-house, on one of the divans, sat a second Sinbad, relating to an admiring audience some of his most wonderful adventures.

Though the crowd was intense, I issued from it without the least impression being left on my mind of hurry or excitement; and, by the time I reached my hotel, my thoughts had so far glided away from

real, and had so mixed themselves up with what, till now, I had considered as ideal life, that it was with great difficulty, and excessive disgust, that I could persuade myself I had ever ridden on the "knife-board" of an omnibus.

A European's first ambition on arriving in Cairo, after having smoked a chibouque and engaged a dragoman, is to dare all the terrors of Mussulman fanaticism by entering a mosque, and with this fancy I woke one morning; so, engaging the services of a kawass from the British Consulate, I set forth on my voyage of curiosity. The kawass that attended me was an armed functionary — two or three of whom are attached to every Consulate, and are authorised by the Egyptian Government to enforce all orders issuing therefrom. When a European wishes to visit a mosque, he applies to his Consul to be provided with one of these "terrible ones," and who, as the custom is, answers for the traveller's life with his own head. I visited one or two in peace and quietness, no one paying much attention beyond just pausing in his prostrations to look at me as I passed along. I confess I was a little disappointed in them. I had pictured myself wandering about in superb halls, supported by lofty columns, carpeted with the richest stuffs from the looms of Stamboul or

of Persia; the most perfect silence, enhanced by some solitary repeater of the Korán, or the occasional splash of a fountain. Their great interest seems mainly to consist in their antiquity; so having divested myself of my boots at the outer door, I pattered about on the cold stone, and sometimes, for a change, on old faded prayer-carpets, or long strips of matting. The ceilings, which must have been exquisite many hundred years ago, were now fast decaying — the rich blue, which might once have tempted the worshipping Moslem to fancy he was prostrating himself "*sub Jove*," seemed now to be almost washed out; and the golden sentences from the Korán, with which the walls were covered, were scarcely legible. Instead of that silence which I had hoped to find, noisy groups of boys were playing Egyptian games among the columns; whilst in the fountains, with the rise and fall of which the whole place resounded, the dirtiest of Arabs were washing the dirtiest of feet, preparatory to their devotions.

Towards the El-Azhar (which is the largest and most rigid mosque in Cairo, and which really does attain to some of the glories I had dreamed of in those already visited) I now turned my steps, beneath the shadow of my warlike attendant, the kawass. In general, there is no great difficulty in

seeing this mosque: an order from the Government smooths every difficulty, and Franks, without number, for months in succession, visit every part of it with impunity: but sometimes a sudden fit of sulkiness comes over the people, as who should say, "*This will not do we have seen our temples desecrated quite often enough;*" and on the very next unfortunate Christian that darkens the gateway they vent their hoarded spleen.

Threading my way along the narrow and crowded streets, I arrived, in due time, at the entrance of the El-Azhar. Bidding me await his return, the while he went in search of the Shcikh, my kawass left me; and, slipping off his shoes, was soon lost to view among the gaily-dressed crowds, streaming constantly in and out of the mosque.

It was soon noised abroad that a Frank was waiting for admittance into the El-Azhar; and a disagreeable-looking rabble began to collect about me. Separated from my protector, I began to feel a little anxious. It was useless to look as if I did not care; — wherever I turned I encountered fierce eyes, and contemptuously curled mouths, whilst from all quarters broke upon me the national curse, "Ya Nazarani! ya kelb bowani!" (O, thou howling dog of a Christian!)

I was seriously meditating change of air in another street, when, elbowing his way through the crowd, the kawass suddenly appeared closely followed by the Sheikh of the mosque, a holy Shereef, a green-turbaned descendant of Mahomet. Instead of becoming quiet, the people now got more violent, and orange-peel and banana-rind began to fly. The Sheikh, who had an eye to a *buchsheesh*, wished to admit me, and, accordingly, displayed the Government order; but the voice of the crowd was loud and unanimous, — “I was to return whence I came.” At last, seeing it was all to no purpose, the kawass advised me to beat a retreat, which I instantly did, in the most honourable way that existing circumstances would permit.

Christmas Day spent beneath a tropical sun, the hot air of noon scarce cooled by the waving and bending of many palms, caused quite a revulsion in the hitherto pleasant flow of my thoughts. Hitherto I had been unconscious of a loose screw anywhere: I had smoked my pipe on the verandah with the utmost content; I had taken to linen trowsers; had abjured waistcoats and neckerchiefs; in fact, I had almost forgotten that it was December. Imagine then my astonishment, when I was greeted one morning by his Prussian Majesty’s Consul, of whose

hospitality I was then partaking, with, "A merry Christmas to you." My first impulse was to ask him to wait one minute, whilst I ran and put on my great coat, my present train of thought and mode of dress quite unfitting me to answer such a salutation. And so it really was Christmas Day! For the first time I felt what a wide gap there lay between me and England; and I passed the whole day in a sort of struggle with myself, trying to feel cold and happy. Sunset came at last and saw me sitting on the house-top, on a level with the tall palms, smoking my chibouque, and sipping coffee from a china fingan.

Whilst I was watching the sun go down behind the pyramids, and listening, as the moon got up throwing a flood of silver light among a thousand Cairene mosques, to the monotonous cry of the inueddin as it floated from minaret to minaret inviting the Moslem world to evening prayer, friends in England were hurrying, in the early twilight of winter, from country walks, or perhaps from afternoon service in our churches, their appetites sharpened for those dinners or their spirits brightened by the prospect of those domestic carousals which are the peculiar property of Christmas, and which crimson curtains shrouding dining-room windows illuminated by blazing fires within so cheerfully tell of.

Had I not been a participator in these little home romances, I make no doubt that I should have found Cairo a very tolerable sort of place in which to have spent my Christmas: as it was, I certainly did not, but it was partly my own fault. Remembering that I was an Englishman, the Prussian Consul (may he be rewarded for it!) whose heart at all times overflowed with kindness, came down on the previous evening to search me out at my hotel, and invite me to eat my Christmas dinner with him; but as he unfortunately omitted to mention the hour, I did not make my appearance till after dark, when I found, to my shame and confusion, that I had kept my host with his hands washed and all ready to begin, waiting for me since one o'clock, at which hour the roast turkey, bedecked with a few leaves of the castor oil plant to imitate holly, had been placed on the table with all the *éclat* which a footman in a blue robe and turban was capable of, so that not only I, but my friend also, who, but for me might have rejoiced in an excellent dinner, had to sit down to a turkey which was once hot, but was now cold. The evening which was as chilly as the day was sultry we spent buttoned up in our great-coats in the corner of the divan (fire-places are curiosities in Cairo), smoking fast and fiercely to keep the cold air out.

The highest point in Cairo is the citadel, which, crowning the summit of a massive stone cliff, can not only peer down into every nook and corner of the great city, but looks far away out into the desert across the white waters of the broad Nile, as it sweeps along with its fleet of grain boats down towards the Mediterranean. Immediately beyond the city walls, the eye ranges eastwards over the vast expanse of desert, through an atmosphere so clear and brilliant that, if the earth was only flat, one could almost count the minarets in Jerusalem, whilst from the different gates can be seen the commencement of those roads which lead across the trackless sands to Damascus, Bagdad the capital of Persia, and to India.

Within the walls of the citadel is the palace where Mahommed Ali dwelt, and from the windows of which he could look down into that city he so loved, and watch his subjects as they thronged along the narrow streets, meeting and passing, crossing, re-crossing, and jostling each other, as they busied themselves, like ants in a nest, about their daily occupations. From among the swelling mosque-domes shoot up countless minarets, their tapering summits losing themselves in a flood of sunlight; but rivet your attention as you may upon the

crowded city,—absorbing as is the thought that roads commence from the walls on your right, which could lead you, with scarce a deviation, into the heart of Persia,—your eye rests last and longest upon the great pyramids ; conscious as you are of the fact that there they are, and have been, and still are to be seemingly within reach of your hand, should you choose to stretch it out, you have been, as it were, carrying on a flirtation with them, devoting your attention to the city beneath, and thoughts of distant India ; at times even to your own person, the shape of your boots or the marking of your pocket-handkerchief—but all the time you have been looking at the pyramids through the corners of your eyes, till at last your love for them can hide itself no longer ; and whilst the sun sinks crimsoning in the West, warning you away before night overtake you, you turn boldly round and satiate yourself with one long last look.

From the spot where you stand on the citadel, they are nine miles, as the crow flies, away on the further side of the Nile.

It would take a great many buildings as large as St. Paul's, all rolled into one, to assume at all an imposing form at a distance of nine miles to any one standing in the churchyard at Harrow ; so that

some notion of the massive grandeur of the Great Pyramid may be formed when I say that, from the citadel at Cairo, you can almost mark the steps by which the traveller mounts to the summit. As you look along the road which leads from the river side across the intervening plain, men, boats, houses, and trees become less and less, till they lose all form in distance; and in that distance your eye rests upon the pyramids, their gigantic forms standing out in bold relief against the formlessness by which they are surrounded. A great favourite of the public, when speaking of the pyramids, says, "they are quite of this world." Now, though it would be a consummate piece of daring to assert that such substantial realities are merely celestial types of the grandeur of a dead nation, yet that first and distant view that I had of them from the citadel of Cairo for ever after invested them in my mind with a majesty that I could not associate with anything worldly.

CHAP. IV.

CAIRENE BAZAARS.

SHOPPING in Cairo and shopping in London are similar operations in the abstract notion only, viz., that of going out to purchase many different things at many different shops; but the details are as widely different as summer from winter.

In England, if a lady wishes to buy a yard of ribbon or a pair of gloves, she is able, as she ties her bonnet-strings before her mirror, to calculate, within a halfpenny or so, the money she is about to spend, and to fill her purse accordingly: but the case is very different in Cairo; in the first place, the purchasing anything is so arduous and tedious an undertaking as to be quite beyond the patience, I had almost said the *abilities*, of the fair sex, so that men have to accomplish as a dire necessity, what to ladies in England forms the all-engrossing pleasure of their week-day lives.

Conscious of the difficulties of shopping, a gentleman in Cairo never buys anything that he can do without; but supposing him to be absolutely in want

of some necessary of life, he takes with him more money than any, even a Cairene, tradesman would feel justified in asking for the article he is about to purchase, and sallies out into the bazaars.

All the shops in Oriental cities are collected into a series of bazaars,—for the most part picturesque arcades, roofed over to screen the merchants from the sun, and which, branching into and off from one another, constitute sometimes, as in Damascus, the entire city. Each bazaar is set apart for the sale of one class of commodity: thus, in bazaar No. 1. sit the sellers of drugs and perfumes; in No. 2. the sellers of silks and stuffs; in No. 3. the sellers of carpets; as in London, Long Acre is devoted to carriage builders, and Paternoster Row to booksellers. Our friend, with his pocket full of piastres, determines to invest in a mutton-chop for his daily meal; so he directs his steps to the bazaar where sit the sellers of meat. The moment he enters, each bearded Moslem butcher, divining his intention, commences to chant in a loud voice the merits of the numerous uncooked delicacies over which he presides. Pausing before one of the stalls, our friend states his wish to purchase a mutton-chop. The fact that in almost all parts of the known world a mutton-chop commands within a few fractions of a penny

the same price, does not at all deter the Mussulman tradesman from first holding it up to the light to show off its points, and then asking five times its value. Our friend, who is expecting this attempt at cheating, is not so angry as might be conceived, though he certainly does pull his hair and threaten to take the butcher before the Cadi: in order to be even with him he flies to the other extreme, and offers for the cutlet five times less than its value. This of course makes the butcher very angry, and moves him to seize his beard and remove his turban in a very violent manner. To make a long story short, the mutton-chop is at length disposed of, but whether for more or less than its real value is determined by the superior cunning of the parties engaged.

To take an instance of my own experiences in shopping: I remember that when fitting out my boat for a two months' cruise on the Nile, I went one morning to buy in a stock of crockery; and, following the guidance of my Dragoman, I entered, as he said, the cheapest shop in Cairo—or rather, a shop where such a broad limit is put on to the price of everything, that bargaining and beating down may be carried on to an almost unlimited extent. Seating myself on the proprietor's divan, and accommodated with his own pipe, I prepared myself to watch the proceedings

going on below me. First of all, Ibrahim, as if the whole shop was his own and everything in it, gathered together a vast heap of all that he said we should want, then squatting himself on his haunches, he blew three or four furious clouds from his pipe, and informed me that he was going to make the price. I wanted to offer so much down for the lot, and so cut both the matter and the expense short; but this he would not allow. The business then commenced. Taking a soup-plate, worth a few pence, in his hand, Ibrahim held it at arm's length, and looking at it with a contemptuous smile, seemed as if doubtful whether he should pitch it into the street, or make an offer for it. Deciding on the latter course, he asked, "How much?" There was a pause for about a minute, like the lull that intervenes between the lightning-flash and the thunder-clap, and then the words "Ashereen queersh" (one dollar) slipped quietly from the lips of the vendor of crockery. Tearing his tarboosh and white cap from his head, Ibrahim flung them on the ground, and then, stretching out both his hands, he began to shower down a torrent of abuse on the head of the unfortunate proprietor, who sat calmly smoking, without appearing to take any notice. The storm at length subsiding, Ibrahim ventured again to refer to the object

of dissension: then came another burst of rage, not quite so fierce as the last, and this time the proprietor attempted to expostulate; and thus matters continued for the next half-hour, with this exception, that at every fresh outbreak Ibrahim got more gentle, whilst the proprietor got more exasperated; till at last all was settled, the plate being handed over to me for two piastres instead of twenty. Ibrahim then looked up to me, and said, " You see, sir, when I make little quarrel?" On assuring him, that I could not but have seen it, he said, " This because I make the good price."

This wild and indefinite mode of carrying on a retail business in a place like Cairo is the more surprising, as I do not suppose there is another city in the world where men convicted of using light weights or any other species of chicanery are punished so severely; I can only suppose that fraud is so essentially the property of every Mussulman shopkeeper, that he can only be convinced of the error of his ways by being brought, for all delinquencies of the kind, within reach of the hangman's noose. Whoever has read Mr. Lane's "Modern Egyptians" will remember the numerous instances which he gives of fraud being punished often with death by decapitation or strangling, but always with the utmost

severity; and how that a baker for using light weights was sentenced to have a hole bored through his nose, and a cake of bread, about a span wide and a finger's breadth in thickness, to be suspended to it by a piece of string; and that, entirely naked, with the exception of a piece of linen about his loins, he was to be tied to the window-bars of a mosque in the main street of the city, exposed beneath a scorching sun to the gaze of the multitude. Mr. Lane tells one anecdote, which is so illustrative of the Egyptian method of administering justice, that I cannot refrain from quoting it:—

“A poor man applied one day to the A'gha, or Superintendent, of police, and said, ‘Sir, there came to me to-day a woman, and she said to me, “Take this *kurs* (or head-dress), and let it remain in your possession for a time, and lend me five hundred piastres” (about five pounds); and I took it from her, sir, and gave her the five hundred piastres, and she went away: and when she was gone away I said to myself, “Let me look at this *kurs*,” and I looked at it, and behold it was yellow brass; and I slapped my face, and said, “I will go to the A'gha, and relate my story to him, perhaps he will investigate the affair, and clear it up;” for there is none that can help me in this matter but thou.’ And the A'gha

said to him, ‘Hear what I tell thee; man: take whatever is in thy shop ; leave nothing, and lock it up ; and to morrow morning, go early, and when thou hast opened the shop, cry out “ Alas for my property ! ” Then take in thy hand two clods, and beat thyself with them and cry “ Alas for the property of others.” And whoever says to thee, “ What is the matter with thee ? ” do thou answer “ The property of others is lost : a pledge that I had, belonging to a woman, is lost ; if it were my own I should not thus lament it ; ” and this will clear up the affair.’

“ The man promised to do as he was desired. He removed everything from his shop ; and early the next morning he went and opened it, and began to cry out, ‘ Alas for the property of others ! ’ And he took two clods and beat himself with them, and went about every district of the city, crying, ‘ Alas for the property of others ! A pledge that I had, belonging to a woman, is lost ; if it were my own I should not thus lament it.’ The woman who had given him the kurs in pledge, heard of this ; and discovered that it was the man whom she had cheated ; so she said to herself, ‘ Go and bring an action against him.’ She went to his shop, riding on an ass, to give herself consequence, and said to him, ‘ Man give me my property that is in thy possession.’ He

answered, 'It is lost.' 'Thy tongue be cut out!' she cried; 'dost thou lose my property? By Allah! I will go to the A'gha and inform him of it.' 'Go,' said he; and she went and told her case. The A'gha sent for the man; and when he had come, said to his accuser, 'What is thy property in his possession?' She answered 'A kurs of red Venetian gold.' 'Woman,' said the A'gha, 'I have a gold kurs here, I should like to show it to thee.' She said 'Show it me, sir, for I shall know my kurs.' The A'gha then untied the handkerchief, and taking out of it the kurs which she had given in pledge, said, 'Look.' She looked at it, and knew it, and hung down her head. The A'gha said, 'Raise thy head, and say where are the five hundred piastres of this man.' She answered, 'Sir they are in my house.' The executioner was sent with her to her house, but without his sword; and the woman having gone into her house, brought out a purse containing the money, and went back with him. The money was given back to the man from whom it had been obtained; and the executioner was then ordered to take the woman to the Rumeyleh (a large open space below the citadel), and there to behead her: which he did."

This is only *one* of Mr. Lane's numerous anecdotes,

but I select it as being a peculiarly happy specimen, both of the mode of Cairene administration of justice and also of their manner of addressing one another. In this case it would seem that both being poor persons, from whom the Cadi had no hope of obtaining bribes, he was induced to pronounce an unbiased sentence on the side of simple equity; but it too often happens that the Cadi is so miserably given to the love of money, that for the sake of a few dollars he will see justice at the deuce, and pronounce sentence in favour of the longest purse. I remember that nearly three months subsequent to the time of which I am now writing, and when I was on the point of starting across the desert for Jerusalem, the dragoman, for whose services I was then paying, and who used to come every morning to see if I wanted him, failed to make his appearance for three successive days; but on the fourth day he came as usual, and, to account for his absence, said that he had been in prison. On my asking for all particulars, he said: "In the next house to where I live, sir, at the back of the mosqué, dwells a seller of kebábs (a cook-shop), by name Mustapha; all Cairo knows this man very well, sir, that he is a bad man. About a month ago, his business increasing, he began to pull down his shop in order to make it larger. As it was

no affair of mine, I said nothing, until the other day I saw that he had wrenched away the framework of his own house so violently, that mine began to totter, and I was afraid that it would end in falling down altogether. So I went to Mustapha, and said, ‘O Mustapha, we are neighbours, therefore do not let us quarrel; but if you do not place supports against my house it will fall down, and I shall bring an action against you.’ At these words Mustapha seized both his ears in a rage, and, cursing me, told me I might bring an action against him, for that he would not place any supports to keep my house from falling.

“ So I went home; and when I had put on my newest clothes and had had my dinner, I took my purse in my pocket and went to the Cadi, and, making my complaint, I gave him a dollar, and then demanded justice. So the Cadi, when he had considered the case and looked at the dollar, said that it was not enough, but that if I felt disposed to give him another I might go home and consider the affair settled: so I gave him another dollar and went home. After a few days had passed, and still my house was in the same state; I began to fear that the Cadi had forgotten it; so I went to him again, and, receiving me with an angry countenance,

he said I was a rascal. On asking the servants if anything had happened, they said that the Cadí had sent for Mustapha, who, giving him four dollars, had been allowed to go away. When I heard this I went back to the Cadí; and apologising for having expected justice for only two dollars, I gave him four more, and left him promising to settle my affair. The next morning I heard that Mustapha had been sent for again; and following him as quickly as I could, I learned to my dismay that he had given the Cadí another present, larger than mine; so that now, unless I gave him some more money, which, being a poor man, I could not afford, my house would fall down; and it did fall. In my misfortunes my creditors came upon me; and having given away all my ready money, I was thrown into prison. All my friends, hearing of this, went to the Cadí, and giving him more dollars than Mustapha could, and having lent me the money to pay my debts, I was let out of prison; and at last Mustapha has been obliged to build up the wall of my house."

CHAP. V.

THE HAREEM.

I SUPPOSE there are very few persons who would not willingly confess to having gathered their first impressions of Eastern life from the Arabian Nights; yet are there many who, after this confession, would go on to say that, having passed out of credulous childhood, they looked upon those thousand and one tales as so much nursery nonsense, pretty enough, but far too absurd to be anywhere near the confines of truth, and who, receiving letters from travelling relations resident for a time in Cairo or Damascus, which smacked of eunuchs, jewellers, and female slaves, would accuse those relations, not only of drawing too long a bow, but of downright falsehood.

It is to these persons that I would now especially address myself: and first of all admitting frankly that, since the days of Haroun-el-Rasheed, all species of Genii, whether good or bad, have ceased to exist, at any rate visibly; that no longer are churchyard corpses subject to be teased by midnight ghoules, nor are the bowels of mother earth in a position

again to yield up countless hoards of wealth to any second Aladdin, even should he come provided with a fac-simile of the wonderful lamp,—I assert that the bazaars of Cairo and Damascus still retain, without alloy, that rich vein of poetry and romance which looks you in the face from out every page of the Arabian Nights.

You have but to live a week in Cairo, to find that it is the old, old story. The Cairenes are as far off editing a newspaper to-day as they were during the Caliphate. The annals of every hareem abound in their tales of horror; and you rise in the morning to learn that last night poor Fatmeh paid the penalty of possessing a heart capable of loving *too many* in the cold waters of the Nile. Officers of justice parade along the streets when business is at its height, the insignia of their office borne before them in the shape of a pair of scales; nor do they hesitate to inflict the bastinado unsparingly there and then, upon all who shall be found wanting. Still do the Cairenes, as in the days of yore, love to frequent the coffee-shops, and to listen by the hour, with half-shut eyes, to the professional story-tellers, who, if you could only understand them, would be heard painting, with all the fervour of which an Eastern is capable, the adventures of one of the three Calenders

or the loves of Camaralzaman and the princess Badoura. During my short visit there occurred at Cairo an incident which might have found itself a place among any of the Sultana's tales, and all the circumstances of which might be condensed into the following narrative:—

The mother of the Sultan, according to the annual custom at Constantinople, had presented her son with a young Circassian girl of such extraordinary beauty, that his Majesty, wishing to bestow a mark of his love upon the Egyptian viceroy, sent her to Cairo to grace the hareem of Abbas Pasha.

Hardly had it got wind that this gem from Stamboul was on its way across the waters of the Levant, when it was whispered in the Cairene coffee-shops that the rose from Circassia was already blooming behind the jalousies of the vice-regal hareem. Many were the prayers that harm should ever be far from a thing so lovely; and many were the Mussulmen who damped their foreheads with moisture from their lips, lest, in passing beneath her windows, they should envy the Pasha's happiness, and so bring the Circassian rose under the influence of the evil eye.*

*

* It is supposed that the saliva is an antidote whereby the effects of the evil eye are counteracted.

A few weeks passed away, when it was reported in the city that the beautiful slave-girl Lulu, or the pearl, was confined in the women's prison on the citadel, and endless were the conjectures as to what she had been guilty of. While the bazaars were still teeming with stories of an attempt to murder her lord, an intrigue with one of the Egyptian Beys, or a wish to escape altogether from the bars of her cage, the Cairene gossips were thunderstruck by a hear-say that she had been seen going into the house of a Levantine Greek in the Frank quarter. Lulu's adventures were just at this point, when, coming out of the Prussian Consulate one morning, I encountered such a crowd in the narrow street which led into the mosqué, that I was compelled to come to a stop. On asking what it meant, I was told that the Circassian slave was known to be in the house opposite, and that the soldiers had gone in to take her.

So at last I was to see the famous Lulu; and I waited all expectation for the *dénouement* of the next few minutes. Presently some one was heard descending the stairs: in common with the crowd I pressed forward to see her, when, to my disappointment, it proved to be merely a young foppishly dressed Levantine, supposed to be the owner of the house, who, informing us in an affected voice that Lulu

had escaped along the house-tops down into the next street, mingled with the crowd for a moment, and then disappeared. That young Greek I afterwards learned was Lulu herself. The soldiers presently returned; and confirming Lulu's own account of her escape from the housetop, the crowd quickly dispersed.

A few days after Lulu's arrival in Egypt and her introduction to the Pasha's hareem, it seems that the viceroy proposed that she should become the property of one of his favourite Beys, who, barring the fact of being a brave and clever man, was in every respect a brute, and a man much disliked by every one except the Pasha. At this proposition Lulu fell on her knees, and, embracing those of the Pasha, entreated not to be dismissed the royal hareem. When she found that tears availed her not, she rose, and, taking the knife which she wore in her girdle, swore by the veil of the prophet that she would die, rather than endure the endearments of the Bey. That same evening she was confined in the citadel, whence a few days afterwards she contrived, to the astonishment of the city, to elude the vigilance of the eunuchs, and to make her escape in a man's dress. For some weeks Cairo was in a continued state of suspense as to her fate; the Pasha's soldiers sought

her in every quarter of the city ; and had not the voice of the people been for her, poor Lulu would have been caught at the very commencement of her adventures. As it was, each day provided the coffee-shops with some new tale ; now here, now there ; one day recognised in the garb of a Bedouin, another day in that of an Arnaoot ; sometimes the El-Azhar mosque was beset by a crowd anxiously expecting to see her brought forth by the Pasha's hounds, who were searching for her within ; and the next hour it was reported that she was concealed among the numerous galleries of Shepherd's hotel. "Never," exclaimed all the English residents, "since the days of Spring-heeled Jack, has mortal been capable of such ubiquity !"

The end of poor Lulu was never known. She was taken at last ; but whether she sleeps in the Nile, or dwells once more in the hareem of the viceroy, the Cairenes say not, and the coffee-shops have ceased to talk about her.

The women's prison on the citadel, whence Lulu made her escape, could yield, I suppose, as many tales of interest as Mr. Harrison Ainsworth has proved the Tower of London capable of, and many of which, through the kindness of a friend, who had been a resident in Cairo during the latter period of

Mahommed Ali's eventful reign, and who vouch'd to me for their truth, I was made the possessor. But as they are so numerous, and I intend the present volume to be an account of my tour in the East, and not a series of stories, I must confine myself to the narration of the following, as being perhaps one of the most interesting, assuring my readers that it is but a single leaf from a book that might be written upon such a subject.

Some years ago now there dwelt in Cairo an old man of high standing amongst the most ancient of the Cairene families, possessed of great wealth both in money and lands, and who, during his lifetime, had filled the highest offices in the state. From among the flowers of his harem he had chosen the most perfect in years gone by to be his beloved and only wife, and from whom in the course of time were born to him two children, a son and daughter.

Whilst yet in their first childhood, Selim and Nába were pronounced by all who saw them at play on the soft divans of the paternal harem, indeed lovely children; but as they passed through the several stages of infancy their separate characters developed themselves into the opposite extremes. Selim passed from a pretty wayward child into a headstrong passionate boy, greedy of wealth and

position, and careless how he obtained them ; whilst Nába, on the other hand, bubbled up, as her name imports, from a mere drop of the clearest water into a bright dancing rivulet ; her extreme beauty equalled only by her womanly gentleness and the purity of her loving heart.

The Nile had overflowed its banks but fourteen times since Nába's birth, when she was betrothed and married, and the old man died. Whilst in life, she had ever been the favourite, and at his death she inherited more than was, perhaps, her due of those lands and that wealth which had been her father's. Inflamed with anger at what he considered an insult levelled at an only son, Scrim vowed vengeance against his gentle, unoffending sister ; but willingly as that sister would have given up all her wealth to appease the brother she could not but love, and which at her death would, according to the wording of the will, devolve upon him, it was not in her power to do so : she was the property of another, and whilst she lived her money went to support that state which her husband's position obliged him to keep.

Again the Nile rose and fell for two successive seasons, when Nába had become a mother and her lord was sent upon a mission to the Porte.

If in England young wives weep at parting for a time from those for whom they have sacrificed so much, even so did Nába shed tears and hang upon the last kiss of her husband, when he left her to encounter the dangers of the stormy Levant.

In the innermost recesses of the hareem she whiled away the hot hours of the Cairene noons, rejoicing in her child, and praying Allah soon to restore her absent love.

But whilst Nába thus innocently passed away her time, Selim was busy to bring about her ruin. In full divan he charged his sister with unfaithfulness to her lord. The accusation was scouted; but Selim was rich, and with an unsparing hand he lavished his dollars to so certain an end that, witnesses being suborned, poor Nába was apprehended and thrown into the women's prison on the citadel.

So surely did Selim add perjury to perjury, and at length prove his damnable charge, that sentence of death was passed upon the innocent object of his malice, though unknown to her.

Driven almost to madness, the young wife lingered out three weeks in a state of the most terrible suspense, asserting her purity and imploring Allah to give her back her only love. It is said that during the silent hours of the night the wretched

girl could be heard shrieking her prayers through the bars of her prison windows, by people in the city below.

The ending of the story I give in the words of an eye-witness, an Italian, who, filling the office of chief druggist to the Pasha, occupied rooms on the citadel adjoining the women's prison.

"Often had I lain awake at night, rendered sleepless by the melancholy moanings and not unfrequently the long piercing screams of the unhappy Nába; and when I did close my eyes in sleep, deadened by the massive wall between us, they mingled themselves in my dreams; so that, whether waking or sleeping, the remembrance of the poor girl was ever with me.

"I had been asleep one night for some hours, when I was awoke by the sound of many voices in the court-yard below, among which I could distinguish Nába's. My room being illuminated by reason of persons constantly passing and repassing with lights under my windows, I rose, and, pulling aside the curtains, was made witness to a scene which I shall never forget whilst I live. Before the gloomy gateway of the prison was collected a small crowd of soldiers, some of them armed with torches, which, throwing a lurid glare upon those immediately

around them, left all beyond buried in darkness the most profound. In the centre of the group stood the unfortunate Nába, the mere wreck of the lovely creature she had been, beside a mule, which the chief eunuch was persuading her to mount. In vain they strove to cheat her into the idea that they were going to take her to her husband, who they said had just arrived and was asking for her. The picture of misery, the poor girl, with her hands clasped over her eyes that she might not see the dreaded soldiers, refused to believe them. ‘Why do you come in the middle of the night?’ she cried. ‘If my husband had returned he would come himself at noonday and take me home again: but ah, no! I see it all; you are going to kill me, and when he does come and ask for me he will be told that Nába was unfaithful, and that she is sleeping in the Nile.’

“Still weeping and wringing her hands, she was at last forced upon the mule’s back, whilst the soldiers crowding round hurried her away, and the court-yard of the citadel was left in darkness.

“Like one in a trance I still stood at the window, following with my eyes the little procession as it wound down the hill-side. For a time I lost it; and when I again caught sight of the torches, they were hurrying along the narrow streets of the city, at an

immense depth below. Still I stood and watched them, constantly lost among the intervening houses, and then again appearing for an instant, but each time nearer to the river. The last glimpse I caught of them was quite in the far distance among the shipping at Old Cairo, and all doubt as to Nába's fate was done away with."

The next morning the bazaars were in possession of the sad tale. Some Arab felláhs arriving during the night from the upper country, had come into the city at sunrise, and reported to having heard the cries of some poor girl as she was forced into a bag, and immediately afterwards the heavy plunge, which told that all was over.

And this is too often the fate of the Cairene girls. From their cradles they are taught to look forward to their hareem life as the consummation of all earthly happiness. At the early age of fourteen—for an Eastern girl is then a woman—she becomes one, perhaps of a dozen, of some rich man's playthings, and is so strictly guarded that should she trip, even but one hair's breadth from the course she is told to pursue, that same night her toy-life is brought to a close by a no less dread reality than the waters of the Nile closing over her erring head.

The European is brought, when at Cairo, so im-

mediately into the presence of all that is romantic connected with the fate of woman, that the mysterious cloud, which ever in his imagination he has been accustomed to see hanging over the entrance of the hareem, becomes charged with the deepest interest. As he rides through the city he passes the house of a Pasha; for an instant he pauses, and casts reverential eyes upon that part which he knows is set apart for the women. Whilst his thoughts are busy wandering about among the fair creatures within, the gates are suddenly thrown open, and, preceded by the chief eunuch, the hareem donkeys go forth to take the air. O shades of the beautiful! houris no longer! but six large massive objects,—they must be females, for they are so different to the men,—sitting astride on as many small donkeys, which seem to totter beneath the weight of the black silk balloons in which their riders are enveloped. He regrets to see that they have no arms; but then they have legs, which dangle awkwardly on either side of the saddle, bandaged as if for the gout; and into the stirrups are thrust great spray feet, which certainly belong to no other legs.

Unlike the English belle, who drives on a June afternoon to and fro between Apsley House and Kensington Gardens, inwardly hoping that, whilst

her own eyes are wandering about in search of the picturesque, those of other people may chance to rivet themselves upon herself, the Cairene beauty leaves all her gracefulness behind in the hareem, and rides out into the world at sunset shrouded in her black silk balloon, the personification of all that is ugly. Certainly a Mussulman's theory of woman is a strange contradiction; for, could a description of the East be condensed into a single page, at least two-thirds of it would treat of the hareem: the care that he takes of her, and the talk that he makes about her, ought alone to stamp her the most precious and perfect of created beings; yet are there some who deny her the possession of a soul. The Koran teaches that all devout followers of Mahomet will go to heaven, where, equal in stature to the tallest palm-trees, they will live in a state of happiness, attended by women of proportionate dimensions, who will ever smile upon them with large black eyes; but in the face of the high position she is to hold in another world, and the jealous care with which she is guarded in this, the European is forced to the conclusion that, after all, a Mussulman's notion of her is quite that of an inferior animal, an acquisition purchased at no price, to be discarded on the most trifling plea whensoever the

fancy takes him. In the lower classes of Arab life it is absolutely necessary for every man to have a wife, who acts in lieu of a servant; but in no case can a woman be married without bringing a dowry. This dowry is very often as little as eighteen-pence, which, should he repent of his choice, he has merely to return to her with a paper of divorce, to be once more a free man; and leads the public to the supposition that the utmost value of his late wife was something short of half-a-crown.

Nor is the husband compelled to substantiate any heinous crime against his wife to procure this paper of divorce. When a young man in Cairo wishes to marry, he goes to some old woman, who makes it her business to be well up in the names and addresses of all marriageable young ladies, and, tendering the usual fee, informs her of *his* notion of a wife; as, for example, she is to be graceful, with large black eyes, wavy hair, of a gentle disposition, &c. The old woman then promises to suit him in a given time, at the expiration of which he is married, and sees his wife unveiled for the first time in the nuptial chamber. According to Mr. Lane, he generally finds her pretty much such as he has been led to expect; but should he have been, as of course is often the case, the victim of a misplaced confidence

in match-makers, he lives with her for one week, as the custom is, and then, presenting her with her dowry and her papers of divorce, she returns to her friends, and hopes for better luck next time.

But before I leave talking of the citadel, I must call my reader's attention to one more object in connection therewith, and which, once shown to the traveller, is seldom forgotten.

At the base of the cliff on which the citadel stands, extends a large open space, called the Rumeylch, serving as a market-place, where large horse fairs are held, and where the execution of all criminals condemned to death takes place. Near to the spot set apart for this latter purpose is a large stone trough, in which the bodies of all of those who have suffered death are washed previous to burial; and as it is never cleansed of the blood of the countless victims who have here paid the penalty of their crimes, but is only diluted every now and then with a little fresh water, the ghastly sight which it presents may well be imagined: but horrible as is the thought, not only do the Cairenes not shrink from approaching its blood-stained sides, but they are actually to be seen crowding round it, drinking of its contents, and attempting to wash away diseases, for which those contents are said to be a certain remedy.

CHAP. VI.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE NILE VOYAGE.

I now began to think of making arrangements for going up the Nile; and, the hotel being filled with persons all indulging in the same train of thought, it was not long before I was enabled to rejoice in a friend, an officer in Her Majesty's service.

On the steps of Shepherd's—nearly pulled to pieces by the donkey-boys who are always collected here in crowds, to implore any traveller that makes his appearance to take a ride, no matter where—my friend and I agreed to sail up the Nile together, and to stand by each other, come weal, come woe, during the period of our companionship.

Whilst we stood eagerly planning the immediate future, it occurred to us that nothing definite could be done until we had provided ourselves with a dragoman; so, as the first bell was already sounding its preparatory summons to dinner, we adjourned to our rooms, leaving word with the landlord that we

wished to make a selection of a servant during the course of the evening.

Having read "Eöthen" and the "Crescent and the Cross," I found myself at Cairo filled with lofty and romantic notions of dragomen in general; that they were a species of guardian angel, whose protection was to be obtained by payment of very high wages, and beneath the shadow of whose wings I was to float among the temples on the Nile and across the burning solitudes of the desert in sweet security: so that having this evening read through, with my friend, the testimonials of a magnificently attired throng, and finished by soliciting, in exchange for our dollars, the services of one of these all-powerful gentlemen, I leaned indolently back upon the supposition that all the details of my existence for the next few months were accomplished in anticipation, and that I might now put my hands in my pockets and trust to our dragoman for everything being right.

The dragoman is, properly speaking, an interpreter attached to an embassy, who, receiving a salary of from two to three hundred pounds per annum, considers himself in a position to hold his head, if not higher, quite as high as the minister himself.

Out of this proud race of interpreters has sprung, in late years, that large item in the population of the East, who, being nothing more than *domestiques de place*, style themselves dragomen, and elevate their chins accordingly. I believe that for the most part they start in life as donkey-boys, and, frequenting the steps of European hotels, pick up, according to their wits, a greater or less amount of Frank languages, which, when it has accumulated sufficiently, enables them to dispose of their donkeys, and to offer themselves as candidates for the office of dragoman. However, as I said before, as yet I looked upon them in the light of quite a superior class of men, by whose means I was to see the East as it ought to be seen.

The gentleman who vouchsafed to become our dragoman called himself Ibrahim Wyse, possessed of numerous flattering credentials as to his abilities, and had assumed his latter cognomen from the fact of his having, as I learned afterwards, received five piastres from the hand of Colonel Howard Vyse, in consideration of that antiquarian having bestridden his (Ibrahim's) donkey during the greater part of one day. In giving us a little sketch of his back history, he omitted the particulars of his obscure origin, and with a flourish, now of the right, now of

the left hand, led us to suppose that his relations with the Colonel had been of a very intimate nature —in short, that the learned man's researches in the vicinity of the pyramids had been considerably forwarded by his means.

When we told him that we proposed making the Nile voyage, he commenced to measure forth his instructions in such wise as induced us to expect the greatest things of him; but he certainly startled us a little by first asking how much money we had about us, and then saying that we had better deliver it all over to him, as he would purchase everything requisite. "For why," said he, "should the gentleman trouble himself; let him give Ibrahim plenty of money, whilst he sits on the divan and smokes his pipe. Ibrahim never goes this way or that way, but always straight!" But notwithstanding that it was early days to think of differing with our dragoman's opinion, we declined surrendering our purses, assuring him that, so far from being a trouble, we rather looked forward to a little shopping among the Cairene tradesmen.

Having secured a dragoman, the next thing was to provide ourselves with a boat, for which purpose we mounted some donkeys the next morning and rode down to Boulak.

Beneath the shade of many palms, which, shooting up from the steep bank in clusters towards the blue sky, hang their beautiful heads lovingly over the placid, but painfully dirty, waters of the Nile, lay swinging in the morning sun long lines of Dahabiehs or pleasure boats. White awnings, stretched from mast to mast, cast a cool shade along the painted decks and down into the snug cabins, the open doors and windows of which revealed divans laden with brightly coloured cushions, cupboards without number, and conveniences of all kinds. In the bows of each boat sat a part of its crew, sleepily chatting and smoking over their words: the moment, however, that we appeared above them, and could be remarked casting eyes of admiration upon all the boats generally, and not upon any one particularly, they rose up like one man, and came scrambling over each other up the bank to direct our choice. After explaining that we only wished to engage *one*, and not a *series* of boats, and that we would look at all of them before deciding on any, they allowed the owner of the nearest to do the honours first, eyeing him, as he helped us on to the deck, with looks of such intense jealousy as would have been justified only by our having already engaged his boat without ever so much as looking at theirs.

For the next hour we were engaged in stepping from boat to boat; and at last succeeded in finding one to our taste, with two good-sized, cabins divided by a space fitted up with a wash-hand stand, &c., small enough to go up the Cataracts, and the hire of which for the trip to the Second Cataract and back was 35*l.*, allowing twenty clear days for stopping at Thebes, or at any place where temples were to be seen or excursions to be made.

Not only was the owner interested in the bargain that was being struck, but the boat itself and all its belongings seemed to awake to a participation in the feeling; for as we stood on the deck gazing with an amount of pleasure upon the craft we considered our own for the next two months, we saw, issuing from every hole and crevice, animals innumerable, from the large black cockroach down to those little things which, though of household familiarity in England, become part of one's existence in Egypt. In dismay we thought of cancelling the contract and engaging some other boat; but learning that the rule held the same with all, and that we might go further and fare worse, we shook hands reluctantly with the anticipated annoyance; and, as a step towards lessening our future sufferings, gave orders for the boat to be sunk before being pronounced ready for occupation.

The next three days we spent in the bazaars, purchasing everything that would be necessary for us during our voyage; and when we considered that after once leaving Cairo behind us we should not be able to rectify any omissions, and that we had to furnish our boat with every possible requisite, from bedding down to a rat-trap, we became fully aware of the arduous nature of the task before us, and that, in order to complete it properly, we should be obliged to be thinking of it, and it only, from morning till night. Dividing the work under three heads, my friend agreed to hold himself responsible for one, I for another, whilst Ibrahim, seizing both his ears, took the whole ninety and nine saints of the Mussulman Calendar to witness that he should not be found wanting so far as he was concerned.

A few sentences in a former chapter, showing the enormous difficulties attendant upon a European in Cairo wishing to purchase but one single little necessary of life, will have spared my now going into all the details of the mass of trouble that my friend and I had to surmount during three entire days, whilst laying in stores for our Nile voyage. Suffice it that, with aching heads, sore feet, and hoarse voices, we did at last arrive at the conclusion that we had bought every possible thing we could want, and

that we might now start away from Cairo whenever we chose; but we also arrived at another conclusion, which gave us great cause of regret, and this was the palpable inefficiency of our dragoman, Ibrahim.

That evening at Shepherd's, when we read his credentials and listened afterwards to his own narration of all his wonderful abilities, we had looked upon him with eyes of admiration, and had thought him a second Dhemetri; but our last three days' experience of him among the Cairene bazaars convinced us of our mistake, and that his varied talents were but children of his imagination, which, though they had appeared real and substantial whilst being danced in their nurse's arms, had evaporated on being allowed to run alone.

Curtis, in his inimitable "Nile Notes," classifies dragomen under four denominations: viz. the Maltese, or the cunning knave; the Greek, or the able knave; the Syrian, or the active knave; and the Egyptian, or the stupid knave. Ibrahim, being an Egyptian, would, of course, rank among the last-named set of knaves, and so afford another example in favour of Curtis's argument; except that in his case, and it is all I can say for him, his knavery was swallowed up in his excessive stupidity. But here, again, his stupidity told against us; as it must be confessed

that, if one is to have a knave for a servant, he had better be an able one ; for though he will cheat his master nine times, he will cheat some one else the tenth even for him.

It may seem surprising that we did not dismiss him, and engage another ; but understanding that a dragoman of no extraordinary capabilities was necessary for a Nile voyage, we thought, as we had gone so far, we would give him another chance, especially as his will to do what was clever and striking was good. So, having got all our stores down to our boat by sunset on the fourth day, we loosed from the bank at Boulak, and, mingling with the shipping, the tall yards of which were spiring shiningly into the evening sky, we let go our last hold upon civilisation, and made our first step towards Thebes and the Nubian Cataracts.

But though we had slipped our moorings, we had not fairly pushed off into the stream. There were many boats striving, like our own, to disentangle themselves from the mass of cangias and dahabiehs at anchor ; and outside all were other boats struggling fiercely to force their way into all the confusion, to secure the berths that we were abandoning ; so that, what with the outward bound and the homeward bound, and the numerous obstacles that lay between them, it was a long while before we got our

own way. However, after a great deal of shouting and fighting amongst the Arabs, and incessant use of their long punting poles, we managed to extricate ourselves at last from the Babel at Boulak; and gliding rapidly out into the centre of the river, we listened to the multitude of voices and the bumping of the boats still engaged in the fray, growing fainter astern of us. Our Nile voyage had commenced. It was moonlight. I make the assertion with diffidence, as it will be said I am aiming at the beautiful; but it certainly was moonlight, for I remember the long line of palms on the western bank was fringed with silver, and I saw it sheeting across the river till it fell upon our boat, illuminating the deck and the comfortable blue cabin, whilst all beyond was dark; but our course lay onwards and southwards into the moonlight, and we cared very little for the darkness we were leaving behind.

As the evening breeze had died away at sunset, leaving our sails drooping from the tall lateen yards in heavy folds upon the deck, the crew again had recourse to their long poles, with which they pushed us, singing as they followed each other up and down along the deck, past the island of Rhoda to the opposite side of the river, where they moored us beneath the palms for the night.

CHAP. VII.

“NILE LIFE.”

AFTER the most unsatisfactory night's rest that till then it had been my lot to experience, I rose at sunrise with a half-inclination to return to the comforts of Cairo, and to give up all notion of a two months' voyage on the Nile.

Really tired, and longing for sleep, I had laid my head on the pillow, repeating the words, “Oh if there be an Elysium on earth, it is this, it is this!” But one is often completely deceived at the first blush of any new arrangement, and so it proved with me. Hardly had I finished Moore's pretty little piece of sentiment, when the creeping, crawling, and hopping of many creatures all over and about me, changed the whole tone of my mind. Even as I lay musing over my prospects for the night, a large cockroach fell cold and damp on to the corner of my mouth from the cabin ceiling, and in a twinkling making use of its numerous legs, wriggled itself round my neck and down my

back. As most persons are prone, at any interruption, however trifling the cause, during the dark hours of the night, I jumped instantly to the terrible conclusion, associating cockroaches with scorpions, that I had been stung by some venomous animal. Regardless of two enormous rats as large as puppy dogs of a week old and a great deal more savage, which were playing about on the floor, I sprang out of bed and struck a lucifer. Imagine my feelings on counting at least a dozen cockroaches, varying in length from an inch to an inch and a half, all in close vicinity to where my head ought to be on the pillow, fleas without number, and a good sprinkling of "mahogany flats."

I was so "put about," as a nursery-maid would say, at the sight, that, without attempting to combat the difficulty, I dressed myself, and, stepping from the boat on to the bank, I strolled off into the moonlight, on the look out for some more endurable Elysium beneath a palm-tree. After walking about till I was so tired and sleepy that I could but just keep my eyes open, I returned to my fleas and cockroaches, and, lying down dressed as I was in the midst of them, slept soundly till the morning.

By the time we had completed our toilette we had left our nocturnal moorings far astern; and as

we breakfasted on deck in the sunshine, the fresh morning breeze blowing among the cups and saucers, we made our comments upon the curiously shaped Pyramids of Dashoor, which we were slowly passing on our right.

There is nothing very interesting in the aspect of the Nile for many miles after passing Old Cairo and its opposite neighbour, the town of Ghizeh, and you steal quietly up the river, enjoying the soft air of an Egyptian winter and its warm sun, and, if you smoke, as you needs must do when you find yourself among the divan cushions, the amber-tipped chibouque.

As we are now fairly embarked for some two months, I may as well give a brief sketch of boat-life on the Nile.

When the sun, shining through our cabin windows, illuminates our mosquito curtains to such a degree, that further sleep is out of the question, first one, then the other, tumbles out of bed;—then nothing more can be done without the dragoman; so there are shouts for Ibrahim, or, as the Arabs call him, “braheem.” Shaking himself from his hairy capote, like a dog from the middle of a loose heap of straw, up gets our fac-totum from the door-mat, on which he nightly rolls himself up.

Thinking to please us, he salutes us in Arabic with a sentence which would present the following appearance, if written in English characters,— “Sabbach bel hayr ya Seedeh” *— and then takes half an hour trying to explain it to us.

With a rope wound round the hand to prevent our being carried away by the current, we next proceed to excite the admiration of the crew by plunging ourselves head first into the river; and having luxuriated in a good bath, we retire to our cabins to dress, during which time the dragoman prepares the breakfast on deck beneath the awning. With tremendous appetites we discuss coffee and eggs, bread, marmalade, and curry, to a degree which I am sure I shall never see surpassed, or even equalled, except on the Nile; and then follows almost the sweetest hour of the day. Leaning back on our divans, the chibouques are handed to us, and looking dreamily onward among the far-off reaches of the river, we have but, as it were, to caress with our lips the cool and polished amber mouth-pieces, to draw thence such a cloud, as in an instant clothes the mud villages, which we are continually passing, with all the poetry, all the romance, and all those airy arabesques with which

* “Good morning, O Master.”

from earliest childhood we have been taught to associate aught that is eastern.

Towards noon—for just at this season it is not too hot—we shoulder our guns; and whilst the men slowly track the boat towards Thebes and the Cataracts of Nubia, we walk towards the mud villages, and, regardless of the attacks of many and savage dogs, we shoot as many pigeons as would last us for a month, if my friend and I were the only persons to eat them. When two o'clock comes, providing a favourable wind has not brought us back before, we return to the boat. Sketching, reading, or cleaning our guns, fills up our time till five o'clock, when, dinner being over, we are seen again reclining on our divans, with coffee and pipes, gazing in sweet astonishment on the glories of the sinking sun.

The evening is generally devoted to diary-keeping; and, as I sit now writing these lines in the cabin, our boat is stealing gently up the river by the pure light of the stars, and the crew are sitting in the bows, singing and clapping their hands above their heads, keeping time with the thrum of the tarabuka: and thus the sun-set melts almost instantaneously into night, whilst we sit reading and writing, listening, now to the monotonous song

of the Arabs, and now to the water, as it gurgles by, beneath our craft. The day ends so, till a clap of the hands, about ten o'clock, brings Ibrahim into the cabin to make up our beds, and tuck us into our mosquito nets.

At first starting, a Nile voyage does not seem to promise a period of any great enjoyment. As yet very far from Thebes, and the atmosphere of Temples and Tombs, saving the pyramids, which, in all sizes and shapes, seem to haunt one for the first week, I began seriously to think of becoming a vegetable, seeking only to exist, till such time as I should deem it advisable once more to resume my mental faculties.

One day, as we sat on deck beneath the awning at dinner, our dragoman standing at ease at a respectful distance,—for already he began to entertain a wholesome dislike to my friend's boots,—and the black cook every now and then peeping round the corner of the kitchen, to see how we enjoyed our “kebábs,” we were startled by hearing a row on the banks close to which we were creeping along; so we jumped up to see what was going on. All Nile travellers cannot fail to have remarked how that every Arab is invariably armed with a long savage looking stick. Hitherto, I had seen these weapons brought into

collision with nothing more noble than the hind-quarters of some poor miserable donkey; now, however, they were aspiring to far higher things, for on the mud-bank above us were about a dozen Fellahs, or labouring Arabs, who, with their loose blue caftans tucked into their sashes to facilitate their movements, were hitting away at each other with right good will; and very clever they must have been at the game of quarter-staff; for, swinging their long clubs high in the air, they brought them down somewhere in the centre of the scuffle, with such tremendous force, that, if they had not been one and all most skilful in the art of self-defence, even an Arab's num-skull must have succumbed beneath such irresistible arguments.

After a bout of five or ten minutes, they all seemed to give over, as if by common consent; and back they marched to their separate villages, each party apparently well-satisfied with the meeting beneath the palms by the river side. Ibrahim was noisily eloquent as to the meaning of all this: "You see them, sir: they wild country people, live in these two villages there long way off; they not like each other, so they make little quarrel; you know this very well, Howadji, this my country; I know this very well; I tell this by my head (pointing upwards

to his turban) by my sense, yes sir; you know this very well, yes sir." Ibrahim has spoken; so the Howadji, as all Egyptian travellers are styled, has to wonder at the vastness of his learning, and be silent.

Each day that we were slowly tracked along the banks, or were sent bowling up mid-river with a fresh and fair north breeze, did we learn to appreciate the delights and luxuries of the East, which were ever being wafted to us upon soft Arabian winds: each day did we drink with increasing pleasure of the sweet waters of the Nile; and daily did we seem to dive yet more deeply into the mysteries of the still-distant south. We knew we were leaving behind us the hot sands of Egypt; yet did we delight in the thought, that each sun that sank beneath the horizon of the Lybian desert, had set but to return on the morrow still hotter and more sultry, till such time as, floating up into the farthest extremes of Nubia, he should look down upon us with such searching intensity, as should force us to say, that we had had enough of the tropics.

There were many English boats besides ours on the Nile; so that we often fell in with companions on our shooting excursions among the sugar-cane and cotton plantations; and at night, as our several floating homes, moored alongside each other, lay

gently swinging beneath the overhanging acacias, evening calls were exchanged, and invites to tea, chess, and chibouques, were frequent. One great source of amusement, and of which we were nearly evening after evening most untiring witnesses, was watching the Arabs at their suppers. The different crews, their day's work over, would light their fires at a little distance off, under the palms; and arranging themselves into circles, would sing, chat, and smoke over their evening meal. At intervals the flames, roused by some one of their hard feet used as a poker, would leap high up above their heads, illuminating their copper-coloured faces and white teeth, which were brought out into strong relief by the surrounding darkness. Often a favourable breeze would suddenly spring up during these *al fresco* meals: in a minute the groups would be broken up, the fires would be abandoned to shed their warmth upon solitudes, and all those men, so lately in the best of humours, would seem to be suddenly thrown into all the paroxysms of uncontrollable rage.

We reached Benisoueff on the sixth day after leaving Cairo, a distance of 77 miles. Of course this rate of sailing was very far from satisfactory; but we had been very unfortunate in our weather, not having had any but adverse breezes since starting.

Benisoueff is the first town of any importance that one passes, ascending the Nile from Cairo. It is on the left bank of the river, and presents the usual picturesque grouping of mosque domes and minarets, in common with all other eastern towns. It is the capital of a province, but its bazaars are very poor and meagre, offering no temptations towards an investment in the curious.

With a view towards stimulating the energies of our crew, we presented them with a sheep and some tobacco on leaving this town, which, as our dragoman explained to us, was the correct thing to do, unless we wished to linger out some six or eight months in performing the voyage to the Cataracts and back.

The only means of arriving at an Arab's affections is by plying him continually with bribes. I say continually, for he only receives one act of kindness to make him long the more greedily for another. Thus, in order to keep up his interest in you, a strict watch is necessary, that not a single opportunity slip of your promoting his happiness in one way or another: in fact, an Arab's "gratitude" strikingly illustrates that definition of it so constantly to be met with in the world, viz. "a lively sense of favours to come."

Our crew consisted of ten men, including the Reis, or captain, and the second Reis, or steersman; the

remaining eight were nearly all Nubians, and fine strong effective men. Our cook was *the* character—a most excellent *artiste*, but very ugly; his salary was 3*l.* per month. The pride he took in attending upon our appetites was most laudable: he scorned ribs of mutton, or a roast turkey, as things of history; *his* art lay in little *entrées*, and all kinds of made dishes. (I blush to say that we lived like *gourmands* on the Nile.) He could make a first-rate curry, of which he was quite conscious; and he always placed it on the table with a flushed face, as if, like a young mother, he had had an anxious time with it; but a single “Taib” from the Howadji sent him back to his kitchen composed and even cheerful.

CHAP. VIII.

KOLSAN PALMS.

MANY of the Arab villages along the banks of the Nile, though in reality nothing but small collections of the most miserable description of mud hovel, form exquisite studies for the pencil of the artist.

To recent travellers on the river of Egypt, the village of Kolsan may, perhaps, be remembered as affording a very favourable specimen. Circumstances may have conspired to render my reminiscences the most vivid; it may be that I was just then in a peculiarly happy state of mind; it may have been the soothing effect produced upon me, as I sat cross-legged on the divan with my chibouque, listening to the monotonous chant of the Arabs, as, at the further extremity of an immensely long rope, they tracked and sang the boat along towards the close of the day; or it may have been the hour, for it was sunset that saw us mooring to the bank beneath the Kolsan palms, colouring with its sinking splendour

the sails of our boat, as they clung and folded them-selves into an embrace of the tall lateen yards, preparatory to their night's rest. In all probability it was a little of all. However, be it as it may, certain it was that my friend and I, long after the sun had disappeared, even long after an Egyptian moon had commenced to throw its uncertain light among the low, flat-roofed houses, and the massively foliaged acacias that gently waved above them, wandered about, inwardly resolving that we would ever after swear by the beauties of Kolsan.

Our nocturnal reveries, in which we very often indulged, stretched beneath some nodding palm, making astronomical observations according to our own celestial notions, were but too often rudely broken in upon much in the way as were those which we spent in the environs of Kolsan ; for we never could be absent very long from our boat, before we had two or three of the crew after us, who, as they could not see us by reason of the darkness, would keep shouting, as they ran about holding their fanooses, or paper lanterns, above their heads, " Ya Howadji ! ya Howadji !" When they found us they used to kiss our hands and grin, repeating that everlasting word, "*Bucksheesh.*" Ibrahim always had a reason for what we considered these untimely inter-

ruptions: "This very wild country villig, not safe for the gentlemen."

So far things had gone on tolerably serenely with the dragoman; but it would have taken a far less amount of penetration and foresight than that possessed by my companion, to have predicted his approaching downfal. I remember one night, that, as we sat and smoked after dinner over our bottle of Burgundy, we both came to the conclusion that it was useless putting off the evil day, and that we might as well now, as at any future time, summon our dragoman and cook, to account for different monies entrusted to their care since leaving Cairo.

Now it is an acknowledged fact among all eastern wanderers, that any Howadji prying with too interested an eye into his own affairs, what time that they are under the surveillance of one of that much-to-be-detested dragomanic race, is ever after looked upon as a "meddling, inquisitive fellow." I say this is an acknowledged fact, and considering we had already been some little time in Egypt, it may not be thought strange that we also knew it. We who had left London to see the great world by way of Paris, nor had been jolted about in a Maltese *calèche*, nor had stridden an Alexandrian donkey in vain — I say, we too were in possession of this curious fact; yet with

all this experience, we fearlessly produced our small account-books, and, whilst we removed the amber from our lips, summoned to the cabin the dragoman and cook, there to answer such questions as we might think fit to ask them. All those little essential details of literary composition, such as words, time, and paper, would fail me to paint in its true colour the awful wrangle which there and then took place; — suffice it that from eight o'clock the long hands of our watches had wandered half-asleep past the hour of eleven, and were meditating an attack on midnight, before we had the pluck to dismiss our Moslem tormentors.

The only excuse one can give for these men causing one so much trouble is, that, in general, they have not the most remote idea of reading or writing — much less that more abstruse science of accounts ; so that they tumble out first one item of expense, then another, credits and debits continually knocking each other's heads, occasionally remarking, “ I tell this my head, sir, by my sense.”

By degrees we sailed into the region of sugar-cane ; and little else was to be heard on our boat, save the splitting and munching of that article. Nor were we slow in following the example of the crew, especially as we found it to be uncommonly good ; so there

was sugar-cane for breakfast, sugar-cane all the morning, again at tea, and, in fact, sugar-cane for the live-long day. I believe it is said to be very wholesome, and serves to clarify the blood: it also possesses another qualification, not an unimportant one, that of whitening the teeth.

A fair north-wester winged us in the most spirited manner past the palm-sheltered village of El Kossayr, where we entered the lands of the Thebaid, and within range of the crocodile. After sunset, and whilst the darkness was thickly gathering around us, we approached the bluff heights of "Gebel Aboofeyda :" and the breeze, freshening, came howling down from the gullies of the mountain in such wise as to make our craft bend right gallantly before its gentle persuasion, causing us at the same time some anxiety, when we called to mind the words of Sir Gardner Wilkinson: "Sudden gusts of wind render great precaution necessary in sailing beneath these mountains, and many accidents have happened in this part of the river."

One bright sunny morning we were awoke by our crew making a great shouting and noise on deck, and, looking out of window to ascertain the cause, we found that we were aground, and foul of two other Dahabiehs, belonging to some Polish noblemen,

sailing under the Austrian flag; so that it was clear as daylight to every sensible Mussulman that it required no small row to set us right again. After half-an hour's pushing and hauling, we were all three once more clear of each other, and, with a fresh breeze, were carried to Manfaloot. Here we landed, as the dragoman wished to make some purchases in the bread and chicken line, towards replenishing our larder. Manfaloot is quite a third-rate town, a great part of it having been carried away by the Nile, which now flows over the spot where the principal portion once stood.

Slowly we crept out again into the stream before a fair, but so delicate a breeze, that our large sails could hardly be persuaded to lift their many folds which lay crowding together over the prow. For a few hours we floated languidly on; but, as sunset left every plank in our boat mirrored on the calm, we let her drift astern slantways down the river, till we reached the bank; and then, as the spot was pronounced too wild and desolate, we threw the men ashore, to track us to the next village, where we should find safer and more cheerful moorings for the night.

My friend and I also jumped ashore with our guns; but as the crew got on but slowly, we soon

found ourselves so far advanced, that we could only at intervals catch the sound of their voices, singing as they worked. With no signs of any village ahead, and the darkness increasing at every step, we were just debating whether or no to turn back, when the noise as of the revolving sails of a wind-mill at our backs made us both start. In another minute, however, our nerves regained their wonted serenity, as an immense vulture with heavily flapping wings hopped swiftly by us into the darkness beyond. Close on the heels of a momentary fear came curiosity, for the silence of the gathering night was now broken by the ill-omened bird's harsh scream of delight as he pounced on the prey by the river's edge, which had so tickled his olfactory organ from afar. Guided by the noise he made, we presently reached the spot; and, having succeeded in driving him away—conjecture, oh you of my readers who have never seen anything more horrible than the dilapidated form of an old crow fluttering in the breeze over a springing crop of corn, what it was that my friend and I discovered, by peering very closely down and gently touching, to have been the vulture's feast!—a meal indeed for the horrid bird, and perchance, a sight that would have cheered the heart of De Quincey's

Ratcliffe Highway hero ! Killed too recently to have become yet very offensive, we had stumbled upon the body of a murdered man, frightfully mutilated, a leg and an arm of which, completely severed, were lying at some little distance off ! Heartily we agreed with Ibrahim and the reis that the spot was too wild and desolate for our nightly moorings !

CHAP. IX.

OSIOOT.

AT sunrise on the morning of the fourteenth day after leaving Cairo, we discovered, far inland, springing up from among the acacias, the gilded minarets of Osioot; and soon after our boat lay swinging beneath the palms of El-Hamra; for as Boulak is to Cairo, so is El-Hamra to Osioot.

As we were still a couple of miles from the town, we mounted some donkeys and commenced to ride thither, the dragoman on before, holding his chibouque over his right shoulder after the manner of a lance, seeming to grow bigger and of more importance as we proceeded; the idea doubtless occurring to him, “what on earth should we do without *him* in the great city we were then approaching.”

Beneath a low-arched gateway we rode into Osioot—not at once into all the bustle of the bazaars, for we had to pass through the court-yard of the Governor’s palace. Surrounded with trees,

the sun shone not there; all was cool and quiet. On a low stone bench, running all round, reposed, in every posture connected with lounging, people of all sorts,—mild, soft-eyed Egyptians, wiry Copts, and double-chinned, grey-bearded Turks. Coffee-sipping and chibouque-smoking seemed to afford each one the most intense amusement; for not a word was spoken. The ground was variegated here and there with groups of figures, mostly clothed in white; some playing with draughts, whilst others seemed absorbed in games with shells. Silence seemed to be the order of the day, so we donkeyed quietly across the square, returning the gaze of many large soft eyes, which were uplifted on us as we passed by.

Leaving the Governor's palace, we entered the long straggling bazaars. Again screened from the fierce glare of the sun, we slipped quietly along with the turbaned stream that was ever moving up and down the long Moorish arcades. Whilst Ibrahim went to market for us, we sat on the divan of a coffee-house; and as we inhaled the perfume of the tumbak, through the long serpentine tube of the nargileh, dreamily listening to the bubble of the water, we watched with renewed interest the gay masquerade that was enacting beneath us.

Small Egyptians, innocent of clothing, laughed and made faces at us, as they passed, seated cross-legged in baskets, which were balanced with wonderful ingenuity upon the heads of their mothers; nor did they seem to become the least conscious of their perilous positions, whenever some tall camel swung its head sleepily in very close proximity to them.

On the ground opposite squatted a very hag, engaged in disposing of a large heap of dark-brown bread pancakes to the numerous passers-by, surrounded by fierce wolf-like dogs, who watched anxiously for her back to be turned to bolt off with at least half her stock in trade; whilst immediately over the unfortunate and ancient female baker, was a barber's shop, its proprietor busily employed in shaving the dirty pate of a still dirtier looking Arab, singing a melancholy cadence as he passed his razor skilfully about the ears of his patient — the subject of his song being doubtless ourselves, if we could gather aught from the significant glances which he threw at us from time to time across the way: why two Franks should be sitting in the coffee-shop opposite at that particular moment on that particular day? and why it should so chance that we got up at the moment we did, and moved away?

After extricating ourselves from the labyrinth of

bazaars of which Osioot is composed, we donkeyed on to Stabl Antar, one of many tombs, cut in the side of a neighbouring mountain; and here, as we tried to decipher hieroglyphics, and stumbled over heaps of mummied wolves, we called to mind the words of Herodotus regarding the ancient city of Lycopolis, the site of which this is supposed to be.

Not satisfied with merely inspecting tombs, my friend and I climbed to the summit of the mountain, whence one of the most glorious panoramas in the whole of Egypt was spread out before us. Without any hedges to diversify the plain beneath us, the valley of the Nile, here very broad, lay at our feet, stretching miles and miles away, like some gigantic billiard table, on either side of the river. From the height on which we stood, we could plainly mark the points at which cultivation suddenly ceased, succumbing to the all-powerful arm of the mighty desert. Not the least beautiful part of the picture was the Mussulman cemetery, which lay afar off in the desert, looking like a city of mosques in miniature.

One of the reasons for our stopping at Osioot was to give our crew time for a bread-baking, an operation which they are obliged to perform at least

twice, and sometimes three times, during a voyage to the Second Cataract and back.

As this bread-baking at Osioot had been stipulated for in the contract made between us and the owner of the boat when in Cairo, and to which we had appended our signatures before the British consul, the reis and his crew had seemed to us to take, ever since leaving Boulak, a sort of savage pleasure, in constantly reminding us that they could oblige us to stop here whether we would or no; so that at last the simple undertaking of converting flour into bread had assumed quite a mysterious form; and still more was the mystery enhanced when we returned after nightfall to our boat, having been in the bazaars all day, and found one solitary sailor keeping watch over our goods and chattels, all the rest being engaged in the town at the bread-baking.

We had finished dinner, the candles in the cabin were lighted, and till within an hour of midnight we sat reading Murray's Handbook for Egypt and writing up our journals; but still the crew remained at the bake-house in the town, and still the solitary sailor sat in the bows of the boat smoking his pipe, awaiting their return, till we were so sleepy that we put the candles out and went to bed.

I cannot answer for my friend's dreams, but I remember that mine teemed with hot ovens, crusty loaves, and swarthy Arabs in white aprons and paper caps, their bare arms of a snowy complexion with being continually plunged into great heaps of soft flour; and then the scene changed to the capacious porches of country churches, where, upon shelves against the walls, were ranged long rows of white loaves, the delight of all the old women from the neighbouring almshouses. And so the night passed away, till among the small hours of the morning I was awoke by a clattering noise upon the deck above, which sounded like the most fearful hailstorm, mingled with the pattering of men's feet, and many voices in violent altercation. Of course my first thought was of the bread-baking; but then surely this shower of things could not be loaves of bread! However, on learning from Ibrahim that such was the case, I went off to sleep again, more mystified than ever.

The moment on rising that I was far advanced enough in dressing to appear on deck, I did so, and then I saw to my astonishment, that, instead of myriads of crusty loaves, the cabin roof was covered with heaps of what appeared to be small flint-stones: and this was the result of the twenty-four hours'

baking stipulated for in the contract. On examining one of them, and feeling convinced of my own inability ever to get my teeth through it, I was anxious to see how the Arabs would manage it; and, as breakfast was then preparing, my wish was soon gratified. One of the crew who acted as cook having prepared a quantity of lentil soup in an iron pot, threw in a few handfuls of "flints," which I need hardly say were speedily converted into about the same consistency. Breakfast being pronounced ready, all the other Arabs gathered round, and, making good use of their fingers, they were not long in transferring the contents of the iron pot to their own stomachs.

Saving on some few occasions, when we gave them a sheep as a "bucksheesh" for good conduct, this mess of lentil and bread was all our crew subsisted upon during the voyage, and which, whenever our boat was moored in a fertile spot, they strove to improve by sending one of their number to collect an armful of a peculiar species of herb, which, when chopped up and thrown in with the bread, added a piquancy to its flavour.

* It was but a tiny breeze that favoured us, as we once more shook out our lateen sails, and, creeping into the sunshine from beneath the palms and acacias

of El Hamra, stood over to the opposite side of the river that we might lessen the current. Towards noon, however, it came down from the mountains like a giant; our frail craft seemed to hesitate a moment as to whether she should capsize or proceed, whilst the big sails flapped and banged, first on one side and then on the other, as if struggling to get free. The contest was short but severe, and ended in our reis, with the help of his nine men, gaining the victory. All was soon made "taut and snug," and our boat righting, after smashing a little crockery, flew wildly before the gale. Two hours after, the Polish Dahabichs came bowling up the river in our wake. We held our own gallantly for some time, for though they were the faster sailers, a stern chase is ever a long one; when, to our surprise, we suddenly put about, let go our sheet, and drove with tremendous force, head on to the bank, allowing the other boats to rush past us. Half beside ourselves with vexation, my friend and I threw down our pipes and jumped on deck, "What the"—(we were very nearly saying something wrong, but we corrected ourselves in time, and quietly added, "What's the matter?") "Dropped one them long sticks," said Ibrahim. Before we could give any directions, the dingey had been cast off, and three men in her were pulling

after the lost article, which was already carried a mile away by the current. It was useless for us to shout after them that we would give them fifty long sticks, as Ibrahim chose to term them, at Girgeh, if they would only let that one alone—go they would, and go they did, leaving us fast to the bank to await their return, which did not happen till two full hours after; thus losing so much valuable time, with a ten-knot breeze in the question, and all for the sake of a miserable old punting pole, of which we already had half-a-dozen on board. “Fifteen hundred tyfels,” we ejaculated, and as usual sat down to dinner, for the first time contemplating an Egyptian sunset in angry mood.

Annoying as all such little *contre-temps* were at the time, I feel quite sure, now that I am able to look back and view them in the past, that they were but necessary evils, by which the sweetness of our Egyptian days were tempered. How is it possible that any Englishman, blessed with a due amount of national choler, should sweep day after day sun-tranced up the *sakia*-singing* Nile, with nothing to

* The *sakia* is the water-wheel of Egypt, used for irrigating the land on either side of the river, erected at short intervals on the banks throughout the whole Nile valley. It is always worked by a couple of oxen, and, as it never tastes grease, con-

disturb the calm tenor of his life, and find himself even on the high road to happiness? For my part I think it absolutely requisite that once a week, at the very least, he should have the opportunity of “blowing-up” every one about him, and thus, with plenty of bodily exercise, he will always find himself in very tolerable condition.

Hotter and more sultry grew the weather, as we day by day approached nearer to the tropics. Our mid-day shooting excursions we began to vote laborious; and often as we lay stretched on our carpets beneath the awning, dreaming over Latakia, the idea would occur to us, what mere vegetables we were gradually becoming: then, as the day waned and cooled, and we were once more able to take an interest in life, we would blame each other's indolence and apathy, and resolve that the next day should be spent in a manner more befitting rational creatures.

As a great step towards carrying out these wise resolutions, we one morning bethought ourselves of turning laundresses; for the washing, starching, and ironing, and, in fact, the “getting” up of fine linen, was quite beyond the range of dragomanic powers; hence we determined to do it all ourselves. “Small tinually soothes the traveller with its soporific drone as he floats up the river.

beginnings make great endings;" and whilst repeating this well-known proverb, we each seized a pocket-handkerchief, and dived forthwith into all the mysteries of the wash-tub. A long debate then took place as to whether that particular item in our "toilette" required starching: coming at last to the conclusion that it certainly did, we starched it accordingly. Now, whether it was that we had laid it on too thickly, or had made some other blunder with it, we could not tell; — one thing was evident, and that was, that the pocket-handkerchief did not look very nice; for it presented very much the appearance of having been suddenly taken with measles, covered all over as it was with blue spots. "Experientia docet;" and I suppose it needless to say that we never again attempted to get up a pocket-handkerchief after the manner of a shirt front.

The fair north breezes, which had been filling our sails for the last week, seemed at length to have died away in the sweet south; and now all day, through many a weary hour, were our poor men engaged in their heavy work of tracking, whilst we, with our rifles on our arms, used to walk along the banks on the look-out for a crocodile, fold on fold of cambric wrapt round our heads, on which the sun beat down with intense heat.

Late one afternoon we folded our wings before the town of Keneh. Dinner was ready, and we “comme toujours” were very hungry : but Murray told of Temples to be seen. For one short moment appetite took up a position *versus* intellect, and a struggle ensued : but, in the end, Antiquities got the best of it, and, leaving our repast to await our return, we donkeyed across the intervening plain to Denderah.

Never have I felt so small, or of so little account, as when, creeping down a small flight of rude steps, I entered the temple dedicated to Aphrodite, and found myself, so soon as I could pierce the surrounding gloom, in a vast hall peopled with columns the most huge. Glancing upwards, I met the gaze of the monster faces with which each column was surmounted: their great eyes seemed to look down reprovingly on me, as if to warn me against exploring too minutely the awful solitudes over which they reigned. The grand and heavy architecture of Denderah tells us that it dates from the times of the Ptolemies and Cæsars; and therefore, when comparing it with the other temples of the Nile valley, it is almost a modern work ; and though its ponderous beauties and gorgeously painted walls may not give that pleasure to the student of hieroglyphics that the Theban ruins do, still, to the mere admirer of

Egyptian wonders, there is a large field among the tremendous halls and columns of this temple of Athor.

The portico is of a still more modern date than the rest of the temple, and was built in the time of Tiberius, as will be seen from the following inscription : —

ΤΙΠΕΡ ΑΤΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΤΙΒΕΡΙΟΤ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ ΝΕΟΤ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΤ, ΘΕΟΤ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΤ ΤΙΟΤ, ΕΙΗ ΑΤΛΟΤ ΑΤΙΛΛΙΟΤ ΦΛΑΚΚΟΤ ΗΓΕΜΟΝΟΣ, ΑΤΛΟΤ ΦΩΛΑΙΟΤ ΚΡΙΣΠΟΤ ΕΙΠΙΣΤΡΑΤΗΙΟΤ, ΣΑΡΑΠΙΩΝΟΣ ΤΡΤΧΑΜΒΟΤ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΙΟΤΝΤΟΣ, ΟΙ ΑΙΠΟ ΤΗΣ ΜΗΤΡΟΗΙΟΛΕΩΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΤ ΝΟΜΟΤ ΤΟ ΠΡΟΝΑΟΝ ΛΦΡΟΔΙΤΗ ΘΕΑ ΜΕΓΙΣΤΗ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΙΣ ΣΤΝΝΑΟΙΣ ΘΕΟΙΣ (L. K.) ΤΙΒΕΡΙΟΤ ΚΛΙΣΑΡΟΣ. (ΑΘΤΡ ΚΑ.)

“ For the welfare of Tiberius Cæsar, the new Augustus, son of the god Augustus, Aulus Avillius Flaccus being præfect, Aulus Fulmius Crispus commander-in-chief, and Sarapion Trychambus commandant of the district ; those of the metropolis and of the Nome (erected) this *pronaos* (portico) to the very great goddess Aphrodite, and to the contemplar gods. (In the year 20) of Tiberius Cæsar (in the 21st of Athyr).”

I have no desire to appear learned by giving this inscription; for I copied it word for word from Sir Gardner Wilkinson's "Modern Egypt and Thebes;" but I thought I might as well take notice of it, as it is interesting, and I really did see it on the portico of the temple, though, owing to its dilapidated condition, until I came to consult the above work, I was in delightful ignorance as to its meaning. On the ceiling of the *pronaos*, or portico, is the zodiac, the fashion of which has mainly, with the help of the Greek inscription, served to establish the fact that this temple was built within the last 1800 years.

Having satisfied myself as to the interior, I proceeded to make a sketch of the exterior, and in this way passed a pleasant half-hour, deaf to the monotonous droning of many one-eyed children, "Bucksheesh, ya Howadji," which signifies in English, "Alms, O traveller!"

We lingered in the vicinity of the temple dedicated to fair Aphrodite till the sun sunk beneath the western sand-hills, and then we donkeyed back again to our boat in the moonlight, occasionally getting a shot at a jackal, as he sneaked across our path.

CHAP. X.

THEBES.

IN a broiling sun we furled our almost lifeless sails beneath the sycamore tree, known to all Nile travellers, which stands on the west bank of the river at Thebes, over against Luxor.

Hardly had we made fast to the bank, before we discerned some six or eight men on horses, galloping towards us as hard as they could make their animals lay their legs to the ground, raising such clouds of dust as at intervals totally obscured them from view. I fancy this is generally about the first thing one sees on arriving at so frequented a place as Thebes. For ought we knew, they might have been robbers of the most desperate kind; but before we had time to think of getting our guns down, they were upon us, and then they proved to be but poor Arabs, possessors of equally poor, wretched-looking horses, by the letting out of which to Frank travellers they managed to scrape a scanty livelihood. Selecting a

couple of the best, my friend and I mounted, for the first time, the high pommeled Turkish saddle ; and then, with our feet dangling awkwardly in the large shovel stirrups, we fled away with loose reins across the plain, in the direction of the Tombs of the Kings.

As we approached the mountains, what little breeze had hitherto cooled our foreheads was entirely lost ; and we were soon riding slowly among scorched and barren crags, which towered up on either side of us. The intense heat and silence which hung over us in our ride through this “ Valley of Death,” fitted our minds most admirably for what we were about to inspect. Not able to open our eyes for the fierce glare around us, and hardly daring to touch even the smooth coats of our horses, whilst the ceaseless chirp of the grasshopper, and the buzz of the dragonfly, struck so painfully on the ear, that we went well nigh distracted, we continued our ride—anything but a pleasant one—till we arrived at the tomb, which has been named after its discoverer, Belzoni.

Our first movement, on dismounting from our horses, was to seek some comparatively shady spot, whence, screened from the sun’s fierceness, we could look about us a little, and thus form some notion of the locality, previously to descending into the bowels

of the earth. The valley in which we were, stretched far away on either side us, sending out branches in all directions. Never had I before, nor have I since, been in a more scorched and barren spot. Not a blade or leaf of anything green helped to subdue the burning glare, which really seemed powerful enough, in a few years, to eat up the very bones which lay buried deep down in the tomb before whose mouth we were then standing.

Whilst our Arab guides lighted the torches and filled the masshals*, preparatory to our descent, my friend and I stepped boldly back some two or three thousand years, and formed items in a vast Theban crowd collected in this very spot, to view the pageant that was conducting the ashes of Rameses the Great to this his last home. Could the sun that now hung over us be the same that then beat down on the heads of those old Egyptians? Could this valley, that turned abruptly round yonder crag, be the same along which were often marshalled the vast hosts of the victorious monarch that here lay buried at our feet? We had hazarded propositions easy of solution; but how hard to realise the fact of our

* The *masshal* is a small iron cage fastened on to the end of a pole, which, when filled with blazing wood, forms a very large and very admirable torch.

standing on such venerable ground! How would old Rameses have rubbed his eyes, and stared and stared again, could he have stepped up-stairs and confronted us,— my friend in a felt “wide-awake,” gazing at the scene around him, through a lorgnette of Dollond’s manufacture; whilst I, in a tweed shooting-coat, stood assisting the guides to light their torches with the aid of a burning glass!

By and by all was ready: so, bidding a temporary adieu to the hot, barren mountains, and the blazing sun, we commenced our descent into the abode of death. Risking our necks by reason of attempting many and dangerous staircases, squeezing ourselves with difficulty along numerous narrow galleries, and almost periling our lives down deep descending shafts, always preceded by our Arab torch-bearers, the atmosphere becoming more stifling and obnoxious as we got lower, we at length stood on level ground, at a depth of 200 feet below the earth’s surface.

Here we had entered upon a new world. The day stole on, and still we lingered among the halls and corridors of Belzoni’s Tomb, examining the frescoed walls, which told grandly, in thick dashes of crimson and blue, of an age gone, never to return — the age of Rameses II. Sesostris the Great.

The paintings in all the halls have reference, in

some way or another, to the entombed monarch — his origin, parentage, and mode of life, but, above all, to his deeds. In some cases the whole side of a chamber is devoted to depicting him at the head of his army, and sitting on his throne, receiving the tribute and worship of conquered hosts, who are represented as stretching far away as the eye can reach, out-numbering immensely his own victorious subjects.

The more one sees of Egyptian sculptures the more amusement one learns to derive from the graphic way in which they sought to perpetuate among succeeding ages their own glorious selves. It seemed to me that the only method they knew of, by which they could represent power and importance, was by increasing the size of individuals to a most absurd ratio. For instance, they would draw the figure of a man ! and so long as that figure stood alone on the wall, he would be but a man, and no one in particular — perhaps merely a donkey-boy grown up : but sketch the figure of another man by his side, only infinitely smaller,— say that he should reach no higher than his knee,— and the first-drawn figure would at once be invested with all the rights and attributes of royalty ; he would at once rise from the subject to the king. Considering this, the

only thing that excited my astonishment was, that they should have been satisfied with so small an area, as the limits of Belzoni's Tomb gave them, in order to do justice to the magnificence and power of the great Sesostris, to whom these walls are dedicated.

But before I go further, I should like to give a brief description of the form and fashion of the Tomb whose subterranean mysteries I was then exploring; nor can I do better than quote rather largely from Sir Gardner Wilkinson.

Arrived at the entrance of Belzoni's Tomb, the traveller, armed with a torch, commences his descent into it by a steep and rugged staircase of 24 feet in perpendicular depth, on a horizontal length of 29 feet. To this staircase succeeds a passage of 18½ feet by 9, at the end of which is a door; and then a second staircase descends on a horizontal length of 25 feet. Arrived at the bottom of this staircase, a double gateway is passed, opening on to a passage of 29 feet, which brings him into an oblong chamber, 12 feet by 14, supported by four columns, and containing a pit filled up by Belzoni, which once appeared to form the utmost limit of the Tomb. A hollow sound in the masonry, and a small aperture, are said to have betrayed the secret of its hidden chambers; and the trunk of some neighbouring

palm-tree being converted into a battering ram, an entrance was forced into the succeeding hall, "the splendour of which," says Sir Gardner, "at once astonished and delighted its discoverer, whose labours were so gratefully repaid." This hall is supported on two columns only; nor are the paintings so gorgeous as in the preceding one, being almost all in an unfinished state, the sculptors not having yet commenced the outline of the figures which the draughtsman had but just completed.

In Egyptian bas-reliefs, the position of the figures was first decided by the artist, who traced his ideas roughly in red; the draughtsman then carefully sketched the outlines in black, submitting them to the inspection of the former for correction, who altered, as appears in many cases here, those parts which he deemed deficient in proportion or correctness of attitude; and in that state they were left for the chisel of the sculptor. But the death of the king, or some other cause, prevented in this instance their completion; thus affording us in the nineteenth century a good opportunity of observing the above process.

To this last hall succeed two passages and a chamber, 17 feet by 14, communicating by a door, nearly in the centre of the inner wall, with the

grand hall, which is 27 feet square, and supported on six pillars, the upper end terminating in a vaulted saloon, 19 feet by 30; and here it was that the sarcophagus of the monarch stood, its position marked by a mass of rubbish, mingled with large lumps of porphyry and the discoloured ligaments of rifled mummies.

And this is ever the lot of travellers. One leaves England, and, after consuming an immense deal of time and labour, arrives, as we did this morning, at the extreme limit, say, of Belzoni's Tomb. If his imagination has enabled him, as he descended, to forget the present, and to mingle with the things and affairs of ages that have died away, he will find that, torch in hand, he is now fast leaving the earth above him, and is on his way to lay a tribute of respect at the feet of the deceased Raineses, who lies down below in his marble sarcophagus, embalmed and shrined in all the magnificence of his earthly career;—I say, if his imagination will have enabled him, as it certainly enabled me, to do this, he will arrive at the vaulted saloon above mentioned, and, as he views but the heap of confusion before him, he will turn discontentedly away, the feeling nearest his heart being, that his pilgrimage has been all in vain. Perhaps the horrid fact will break less

quickly upon him, and, turning to his guide, he will ask, "Where are the remains of the Great King Rameses?" The reply that he will receive will surely then dispel all his treasured dreams of what might be. "Return, O Frank, to Europe, and to the lands of thy fathers; go, search the museums of London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna, and there learn something of the last days of the Great King Sesostris." To the same effect, but differently expressed, would be the reply of one of the many English or Germans who spend their best days beneath the scorching heats of Theban suns, studying ancient Egyptian lore, till the reading of hieroglyphics is made easy as their mother tongues: an answer to the query as to the remains of Rameses would doubtless by them be summed up in the few words of, "Bless your sweet innocence, anywhere but in Egypt!"

The paintings in the grand hall are very fresh and brightly coloured. They almost all refer to the different states through which the deceased would pass on his way to final happiness, and in some instances to the mysteries of the Egyptian religion.

After spending nearly the whole morning by torchlight, in the sepulchral retreats of Belzoni's

Tomb, we once more turned our faces earthwards, and, assisted by our Arab attendants, managed to scramble up again into the world.

We next visited the tomb named after its discoverer, Bruce, and sometimes called the "Harper's Tomb." It is dedicated to Rameses III., and, though not so large as the one already visited, is generally thought to contain paintings of far greater interest, as they refer mostly to the manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians, the fashion of their furniture, arms, and implements of agriculture. The plan of it is precisely the same as of the one mentioned; so I forego its description.

Leaving the valley of the Tombs of the Kings, our little cavalcade wound up the steep side of one of the neighbouring mountains. It was late in the afternoon when we reached the summit. The heat of the day was passed; and, halting a short time for the sake of our horses, we thoroughly enjoyed the glorious panorama that was spread out on all sides of us, comprising the whole plain of Thebes. With nothing to interrupt our view, we lifted our eyes from the crumbling glories of the Memnonium, immediately below us, to the court-yards and massive propylons of Medeenet Haboo on our extreme right; then, glancing across the great plain, we fell in with the

vocal Memnon and his colossal brother, sitting there in the same attitude, and with the same expression, a little more time-worn, on their giant faces, as when all the bustle and excitement of a great city surrounded them, instead of the solitudes over which they now keep watch.

Leaving the *colossi*, our eyes continued their flight eastwards, till they fell upon the Nile, and the little fleet of dahabiehs which lay moored beneath the columns of Luxor—the red ensigns of the English boats, and the French tricolours, fluttering amicably in the sunset breeze, whilst their several occupants stood afar off, among the Tombs and Temples of the western mountains. By turning the head northwards a little, and following the course marked out by the avenue of Sphinxes, which once extended all the way from Luxor, we passed beneath the triumphal arch,—a worthy preface ushering us magnificently to all the grandeur of Karnak.

Our eyes having completed their little Theban tour, once more returned to the summit of the mountain, where we still stood; and then, as we prepared to descend, we threw a last glance over the scene before us—the whole of Thebes. It really is a great deal to say. What would not many a Londoner at this moment give, to ascend to the*

cupola of St. Paul's, and thence to gaze upon the ruined Temples and prostrate columns of the great Thebes, extending for miles on either side of him? Will the day ever come—but doubtless it has—when the Sunday excursionist from the smokes of London will be able to climb the heights of Hampstead, and thence, through the medium of a peep-show, delight himself with a glance at Egyptian wonders?

Thebes must indeed have been a glorious place, when, as some say, the *colossi* sat on their great thrones, looking down a broad highway, which stretched from their bases away to the obelisks and columns of Luxor,—when chariots rolled their wealthy occupants from the altars of Karnak to their villas and palaces on the banks of the Nile,—and when Theban “swells” sipped sherbets beneath the shadow of the singing Memnon! Perhaps they said then, as we say now, “Surely arts and sciences have come to a climax, they have at length attained their culminating points; and we Egyptians are verily the greatest men on this earth”—*Sic transit, &c.* Let time roll on, let a few thousand years intervene, and then what is to be seen where once stood the great Thebes? nothing but poverty and desolation,—a half-starved, dirty population, who

plaster their wretched little mud huts all over the still standing relics of their ancestors' glory, there live, and are satisfied.

The sinking sun was already warning us to depart, when we found ourselves before the gateway that leads to the propylons of Medeenet Haboo; so that we had but little time to criticise a barbarous taste, which wrenched away the godlike faces that surmounted all the interior columns, laid puny cross-beams of red sandstone to support a roof, and converted one of the finest courtyards in Egypt into a Coptic place of worship. On a lotus-capital, belonging to some fallen column, my friend and I sat; and as we watched the sun's fast-sinking splendour, glowing crimson among the halls and lofty arches of Medeenet Haboo—the dragoman filled and lighted our chibouques.

The shades of evening drew rapidly around us, and still we sat and smoked—a queer kind of homage to pay to Rameses III., to whom this temple is dedicate, and whose battles are still raging in relief along its walls. The sun bade us farewell at last, and in the moonlight we stumbled out again on to the plain, and, deafened by the croak of many frogs, retraced our steps back to the Nile, there to

criticise Egyptian architecture over kebobs and pistachio nuts.

A night's rest, and a swim in the river, once more fitted us for antiquarian researches. We questioned Murray's Hand-book, the dragoman, and an Arab guide, possessed of but a very imperfect English education, and the reply was the same from each—"Tombs." "What, Tombs again!" said we. "Well be it so." And half an hour afterwards we lighted our torches at the entrance to the Assascef.

Never shall I forget the pungent odour which came forth to welcome us to the abode of Death. However, as we had long ago determined that, whilst we remained in Egypt, we would not be too particular in our fancies, we were soon exploring its recesses. We had got to some depth, with our pocket-handkerchiefs applied to our nasal organs, when the confined atmosphere, and the aforesaid essence of decayed mummies, became so very powerful, that not all the beckonings and gestures of our guides could induce us to go a step further; so we beat a rapid retreat, and the sun's glare felt quite refreshing, when we stood once more within its influence.

I had now had enough of Tombs—not so my friend; so, whilst he went in search of more, I re-

mained beneath the protection of a cotton umbrella, to make a sketch of the Theban plain, from the heights of Dayr el Bahree. In the columned grove of the Memnonium we spent the sultry hours of noon, lost in admiration at the excessive grace of its Osiride avenues, and the proportions of the huge statue of Rameses, which lies a disjointed and gigantic mass, amidst the ruin of his own palace.

And now adieu to Thebes for awhile ; for our boat has once more shaken out her wings ; the reis and his Nubian crew have arisen from the torpid state in which they have been buried for the last day or two, and are singing, as we slip our moorings, and move lazily out into the stream ; and the Howadji, once more reclining on their divans, spread beneath the awning, indulge in dreams of the Cataracts and the ever-distant south.

CHAP. XI.

ESNE.

How shall I tell of Esne? Shall I rhapsodise on its extensive and richly-stored bazaars, the luxuries of its well-appointed baths, and the magnificence of its Temple? Or shall I torture myself by recalling to mind its creeping things innumerable, its crowds of naked and *bucksheesh*-whining children, and its mangy dogs?

Gorgeous beyond description are the sculptures of the Esne Temple, consecrated to Kneph, the deity that presided over the ancient Latopolis. The traveller leaves the street cleared out by Mohammed Ali in 1842, and descends into it by a rough flight of steps. It possesses something of the form of the Temple at Denderah; and from the Roman names which occur frequently on the portico, one is led to believe that it dates from about the same period. However large it may once have

been, all that is to be seen of it now is the grand hall, supported by columns, whose beauty is not surpassed in any Temple throughout the Nile valley. Each column is surmounted by a different capital; and each capital is so perfectly beautiful, that it forms a study in itself. On the ceiling of the portico is a zodiac, similar to the one which I had seen at Denderah.

But, for once during my Nile voyage, let me away with Temples and hieroglyphical speculations, and by moonlight, preceded by a fanoose-bearing Arab, let me leave my boat on the river, and, climbing up the steep bank, let me enter the nearest coffee-house: and there behold me sitting cross-legged—(I defy any European to look at a divan, without instantly detecting a tendency in his legs to curl up, and let him down as complete a Turk as ever stroked a beard)—on the low mud-built divan, which ran round the room. Coffee is handed, the gurgling *nargileh* is lighted, and, leaning back, I prepare myself to watch the mystic motions of two Ghawazee, who are sitting on the ground before me, smoking cigarettes, and toying with each other's head-dresses. At the further end of the room squat the orchestra, scraping harshly against the nerves of all present, as they tune their several instruments

for the coming dance. Fresh worshippers at the shrines of Mecca, and of pleasure, keep dropping in,— the more wealthy ones followed by their “chi-bouque-gees,” or pipe-bearers,— till at last the room is filled: and then comes a pause, which is at length broken by some old sheikh, leaning forward and exchanging a few words with the Ghawazee, who signal to the orchestra that all is ready. For some minutes all other sounds are swallowed up in the excruciating attempts at “music,” which are being made by our Moslem band, but which at length subside into a tremulous and plaintive measure.

All this time the Ghawazee have been crouching on the floor, as if waiting for the moment of inspiration, which at length seems to fall upon one of them; for, raising her head, and throwing back the long black tresses of her hair, she raises her arms; then, chinking her castanets to the quivering time of the music, she slowly raises her body, till at last she stands erect before us. The music now streams forth in double volume; the thunder of the tarabuka softens the sharp clatter of the castanets, which she is rattling over her head, as if to make them act as safety-valves for her rapidly increasing excitement. Raising her voice, she breaks forth into one of those wild Arab chants, so peculiar,

and so difficult of imitation, and only to be sought and found among the palms that wave over the sweet waters of the Nile. With all the muscles of her body working to the time of the music, she moves slowly about the room, bending and twisting her lithe figure into all imaginable postures.

Meanwhile, the other Ghawazee has been sitting motionless on the ground, but following with her large kohl-tinted eyes every movement of her sister. At last her time comes. Shaking her castanets, she also rises — the signal for the other to sink apparently exhausted on the divan. With hardly any variation, she repeats the same movements, and by and by is joined by the first Ghawazee, and then they dance together, singing in unison. At times they twine their arms round each other's waists, and then, suddenly bursting away, they fly far from each other ; quicker still they rattle their castanets, louder and more wild they sing ; the Moslem band outplays itself ; even the Howadji are tempted to throw aside the *nargileh*, and indulge in an Arabian dance ; but nature can at last hold out no longer, and, breathless, the poor Ghawazee throw themselves on the divan, amid the "taibs" and "bravissimas" of the assembly.

We bid adieu to our entertainers ; and following

our Arab boatman, with his paper lantern, down to the river, are soon dreaming beneath our mosquito nets of Egyptian coryphées, and how that Mohammed Ali was wise, when he preferred their room to their company in Cairo.

A curious race is the Ghawazee, dedicate from their youth to pleasure and the world. Quite distinct from other Egyptians, they marry among themselves, seldom living long in one place; but, like the Bedouin of the desert, are ever on the wing, pitching their tents where most is going on. From time immemorial their love of the "gorgeous" has been intense; so that at last they have become wealthy, handing down from generation to generation numberless richly-mounted head-dresses, heaps of gold and silver coin, ear-rings, and all manner of precious stones.

I cannot bear witness to their extreme beauty as a race, though I certainly saw some that deserved to rank as belles among the fairest of the Egyptian fair; but the excessive elegance with which they all attire themselves, renders presentable even those for whom dame Nature has but ill provided.

There is not much variety in their mode of dancing; it is ever the same easy, voluptuous motion, to which the feet play but a very secondary part — in fact, are

never seen, being always hidden in a perfect cloud of crimson silk.

It is essentially dramatic, and of course has reference to love, *par excellence*, of a most impassioned kind. If there are two Ghawazee, the one takes the part of the coy mistress, whilst the other does her utmost to represent the ardent and often the frantic lover; and in such characters they chase each other over every pattern of the carpet upon which they are dancing.

So far all is very correct and proper; but there is yet one other *pas*, which, as I believe it to be the peculiar property of the Egyptian Ghawazee, so I suppose she is peculiarly at home in; but as I am loth to outrage any English notion of propriety, I refrain from detail; suffice it that, nearly beside themselves with the fumes of arrack, supplied by a Mussulman audience, who certainly ought to know better, the Ghawazee disencumber themselves of all attire, in which alone they are graceful, and appear for the time in the same guise to which, in the days of Fauns and Satyrs, wood-nymphs were accustomed, before petticoats were invented.

I remember hearing some Nile travellers criticising the Ghawazee, and pulling them to pieces on the score of their being so far removed from their stan-

dard of a natural woman, in short, that they were such “bundles of affectation” that they could not look upon them with any degree of pleasure. I thought their argument decidedly weak, inasmuch as the very fact of a woman forsaking the ordinary course of life prescribed to her by nature, that of a wife and the mother of a family, careful of her lord’s affairs, and entering upon the profession of a danseuse, obliged her of necessity to affect all the peculiarities which went to make up the character she had undertaken, and which, being so wholly and entirely fictitious, was of course foreign to her nature.

Doubtless the Ghawazee are affected, but, as they only affect to be Ghawazec, may be very charming nevertheless.

Towards the close of Mohammed Ali’s reign, the effect produced upon the good people of Cairo by their dissolute habits became so bad, that the old Pasha sent them all away to the Upper Country, bidding them cherish their beauty among the Esne palms, or crack their sweet voices ‘mid the roar of the Nubian Cataracts. The Turkish grandees, who had been wont to sit beneath the Esbekeyah acacias, enjoying the *dolce far niente* of sunset hour through the long tube of a *nargileh*, and listening to the Ghawazee singing, then prayed to the Pasha for a commutation

of the sentence, or else a *quid pro quo*. With regard to the Ghawazee, the Pasha was firm; but, out of kindness to his subjects, he gave orders that a number of boys should be collected, who, imitating the Ghawazee in everything,—in costume, in voice, and even in the veiling of the face and the kohling of the eye and eyelash,—should frequent the coffee-houses of the Esbekeyah, and, by their singing, should somewhat atone for the banishment of the fair ones.

Ever since that sentence of exile the glory of the Ghawazee has waned and faded, till during our visit the last stroke seems to have been given.

The late viceroy Abbas Pasha, on a tour to the Upper Country, arrived at Esne. The inhabitants hearing of his approach, prepared to receive him with all honour. Deputations were formed, addresses were composed, and, if there had been a corporation, doubtless a dinner would have been cooked; among others, the Ghawazee, tired of their Esne homes, made ready an address, beseeching His Highness to reinstate them in their old Cairene haunts.

So zealous were they in their own cause, and so eager were they to prove their loyalty to the Pasha, that they were the first to welcome him on his landing at Esne; and, as they lost no time in endeavouring to obtain an audience, their address was the first that

the viceroy perused. But instead of looking on them with a kindly eye, the Pasha is said to have struck his forehead, and to have expressed great displeasure at the Ghawazee having been the first to meet him, and should still further have had the presumption to make such a request; so he gave orders that they should all be dismissed from Esne, and, instead of returning to Cairo, should be scattered over the furthest limits of Egypt.

Twenty-four hours after, not a single Ghawazee was to be seen in Esne.

CHAP. XII.

IBRAHIM.

AFTER having with some trouble collected all our crew, we were on the point of setting sail with a favourable breeze from Esne, when we discovered that Ibrahim was missing. Being as it was slightly out of temper at losing so much of the morning breeze, we became still more so when, after waiting a full half-hour, we perceived him a long way off, approaching us in the most leisurely manner, chatting as he walked with one of his many Esne friends. Shouting to him, he at length accelerated his pace, and finally jumped from the bank on to the deck, as we moved off. He received his rowing very impatiently ; and as he seemed to be brimful of some capital excuse, we asked him what he had to say for himself. “ This very bad thing of the gentlemen to make quarrel with me.” “ But why ? ” said we. “ Because I only just been to take the bath ; this the very clean thing, you know this very well, sir.”

As were upon the subject of cleanliness, washing, &c., we thought we would ask him a few more questions: so we said,—

“We didn’t know you were so fond of washing, Ibrahim?”

IB. “Oh, this very good thing to wash sometimes.”

CAPT. P. “Sometimes! but don’t you wash very often?”

IB. (*with a vacant stare*) “I not know what you mean, sir.”

CAPT. P. “Why, don’t you wash every day?”

IB. “Wash every day, sir! Why, I should have to take off my clothes every day!”

CAPT. P. “And when did you last take off your clothes?”

IB. “I forget, sir.”

CAPT. P. “Then you forget when you last washed?”

IB. “Yes, sir.”

Of course we did not waste any more time upon Ibrahim; and I must confess that, dirty as I had considered all Arabs to be, I did not suppose that a well-dressed, and, to all appearances, a respectable member of Egyptian society, such as we had taken Ibrahim to be, would have unblushingly pleaded

guilty “to forgetting the last time that he either removed his clothes, or performed his ablutions.”

This last little conversation with our dragoman, when added to the long list of his countless acts of stupidity committed during his residence in our boat, made us think such “excessively small things” of him, that we began to feel that really we might get on quite as well without him, barring the matter of interpreting; for as yet we had not taken the trouble to learn a word of Arabic. The day after leaving Esnc, I felt sure that Ibrahim “got out on the wrong side of his bed,” or he put the hot end of his cigar in his mouth, or he did something so very peculiar, that his behaviour towards us became so more than usually “cantankerous,” that we both felt it would be but kind to hint at the possibility of our dispensing with his services at the next town. Instead of profiting by these hints, he became very impertinent; so, in order to support our dignity before the other Arabs in the boat, we brought matters to a crisis by saying, “See here, Ibrahim, if you don’t choose to conduct yourself properly as our servant, we’ll turn you out of our boat at Edfoo” (that being the next town, about three miles ahead). This settled the business: “He was not going to be treated in that manner by dogs of Christians,” &c. &c. So down

he went into the hold of the boat, swearing terribly; and, after colossal exertions, to the great amusement of the crew, he managed to dislocate his trunk from among the canteens and lumber, and, lugging it up on to the deck, he took off his tarboosh, wiped his face, and sat down upon it, saying, that "He had made up his mind he would leave us at the next town."

As he was still in our service, and I particularly wanted my chibouque refilled a few minutes after this explosion, I handed it over to him with an appropriate request, but was quite startled with the burst of anger with which he received it. "Fill your pipe! I am not your servant any more! fill it yourself!"

This brought matters to a point sooner than we had intended, and I confess that all my equanimity was for the time upset; for the next moment saw me grasping Ibrahim by the collar and shaking his head backwards and forwards violently. Bidding the *reis* steer for the bank, we told Ibrahim either to fill the chibouque or get out of the boat there and then, instead of waiting till we reached the next town.

Now, though I had acted throughout as if it was *all one* to me whether Ibrahim stopped with us or not, still in my own heart I had conceived that it would

be a great nuisance to perform the rest of our voyage minus a dragoman. This being the state of my feelings, my grief and vexation may be more easily imagined than described, when Ibrahim, our *dragoman*, our *interpreter*, our *flunkey*, our sole *turnpike* to all Moslem joys, there and then obeyed the order, and left us, five hundred miles up the country, surrounded with every species of Arab knavery and ferocity, and unable to speak a word of the language.

"*Maintenant*," as our light-hearted neighbours always say, "*voila un fait accompli*." Good-by, friend Ibrahim; we watch you as our boat again stands out into the stream; and as we float idly up with the sunset breeze towards Edfoo, we every now and then turn to look at the spot where you deserted us, and see you sitting on your trunk of Beyrouth workmanship*, your head on your hands, doubtless wondering whether it is possible you have made a fool of yourself.

However, it was all very well to make a joke of it; but we really had placed ourselves in a very

* I never yet met with a dragoman that did not possess one of those gaily-painted trunks, made at Beyrouth, and which ring a small alarm whenever they are opened.

awkward position. Fortunately, we had a German Grammar on board, which professed to give all its students an extensive insight into the mysteries of the Arabic language; so that this evening, after dinner, instead of thinking all imaginable pretty things about the broad moonlight, or the poetry of Oriental nights, we set ourselves to work to try and understand Mr. Nolden (the author of the afore-said Grammar); and long after our Nubian crew had dropped from singing into sleep, my friend and I sat in the cabin catechising and sounding each other's newly acquired proficiency in the Arab tongue. It was terribly up-hill work at first; but, by dint of perseverance, we managed, about midnight, to make the black cook comprehend that we wished to have our beds made up: and I am quite sure that the off-hand and masterly manner in which we bade each other "Good night," in a hitherto most mysterious language, tended very considerably towards the good seven hours' sleep that followed, beneath the mosquito curtains.

The first feeling that I was conscious of the next morning was that of intense desolation. There was no Ibrahim to clean my boots, or fill my bath: I had to make my bed myself, and shake out the mattresses on deck, beneath a baking sun. Then

followed a bitter altercation with the cook, as to what we would have for breakfast. We wished to have the legs of yesterday's turkey "devilled;" but could not make an approach in Arabic to either "fried," or "cayenne pepper."

However, in proportion as my spirits fell, those of my friend rose. Like Mark Tapley of old, he seemed to think that, if ever there were circumstances in which it was creditable for a man to be jolly, they were the present: so, instead of lamenting over the fact of having to sweep out the cabin himself, he lit a "weed," and backed himself to handle a broom with far greater dexterity than I. In this sun-shiny light he looked at all our little troubles; and before sunset I also was enabled to feel tolerably independent of dragomen — at least so far as manual labour was concerned. But then there was the "talking :" of course this was the most serious part of all, and a wretched mess we made of it for the first week. Still, as we had made up our minds to be quit of Ibrahim, we were obliged to look even this difficulty boldly in the face.

Being now brought into closer relationship with our black cook, — for Ibrahim had always acted as a sort of medium between the cabin and the kitchen, — we found him to be an uncommonly quick, clever

fellow ; in fact, so clever, that when not another man in the boat could make head or tail of our curiously-formed, badly-pronounced Arabic sentences, he understood directly, and then explained our meaning to the crew ; so that, though he knew not a word of English, he took upon himself all the interpreting duties of a dragoman.

Malgré all our tiffs with Ibrahim, and struggles to do without him, we still proceeded slowly but surely on our Nile voyage. We had sketched the magnificent propylons of the Edfoo Temple, and had become familiar with the god "Hor-Hat's," or "Agathodæmon's" way of holding his right arm ; also, that "Hor-senet-to" was son to "Hor-Hat ;" and that these two, with "Horus," formed the triad worshipped in this city. Then, shaking off hieroglyphical fetters, we had indulged in morning rambles among the quarried galleries of Hagar-Silsileh ; we had looked upon the ruins of Com-Ombo by moonlight ; and on the 26th of January, a few hours after sunset, we drove, with a fresh breeze aft, high on to the sandy bank of Assouan, the ancient Syene, securing a berth among the little fleet of European boats all moored there preparatory to ascending the much-talked-of Cataracts.

On awaking, and putting our heads out of the

cabin windows the next morning after arriving, what was our astonishment at beholding the Signor Ibrahim, whom we had left quietly seated on his trunk some sixty odd miles astern, here at Assouan, by the side of our boat, chatting with the crew as if nothing had happened. How on earth the fellow had managed to anticipate us, and be here to receive us, we were at a loss to determine. At first we were almost inclined to doubt the fact of his identity; but when we had dressed, and were able to make a closer observation of him, and we found him sprawling in the dust at our feet, imploring to be taken back again, there was no longer any question as to who it was. Of course we were deaf to all entreaties; we were resolved to do without him, if only to prove to the dragomanic world that they were not the "indispensable accompaniments" that they fancied themselves to be.

When, at last, Ibrahim saw we were in earnest, and that all hopes of ever being received back had vanished, he was in a terrible fright, and he came to us, "as one brother cometh to another," to ask us what he was to do? We told him that he had better take passage in the first grain-boat passing down, and so restore his valuable self to the bosom of his family in Cairo as soon as possible. But, to our surprise, he

said, “ O Howadji, this very easy thing to say ; I know this very easy thing to get a passage to Cairo : but I not like to go and kiss my wife and children, lest, whilst I am in the Bazaar, the kawass from the Pasha will take me, and give me bastinado ; and, O sirs, this very bad thing, this bastinado ; this just like a man in the sun without his turban ! ”

On putting further questions to him, and to the dragomen of some other boats, who were standing round, we gathered the following, viz. : —

“ That when a man wished to act as a dragoman, he had to procure a license of some kind from the Egyptian Government, and a note was made of his name, parentage, and all about him : the moment that he was engaged by any traveller, he was obliged to go and report himself as about to leave Cairo, on such a day, in the capacity of dragoman to such a traveller, giving the traveller’s name, &c. He was thus in a manner made responsible for the safety of his master ; and he was further obliged, on returning from his voyage, to go and report himself as having performed his duty, and ready for fresh employment.

“ Again, that as the Consulate, for whatever nation the traveller happened to be, was responsible for the good conduct of the said traveller, and a correspondence between that Consulate and the

Egyptian Government was constantly kept up ; so, in one way or another, a most perfect check was kept upon the movements of both *voyageur* and *dragoman*. On the other hand, if either failed in his duty, he was answerable, the one to his Consulate, the other to his Government."

Now, as Ibrahim was in full possession of all these little forms, and seeing that he was very doubtful as to the correctness of his late actions, he was naturally a little anxious concerning the mode of his reception, on arrival in Cairo. Doubtless a sort of bastinado nightmare was ever running wild in his brain. He pictured himself landing at Boulak, and stealing unnoticed among the acacias, which line the road into Cairo, till he arrived at the gates of the city ; these he passed in safety, mingling with a stream of pilgrims and heavily-laden camels : then he fancied himself exposed to all the scrutiny of the crowded bazaars ; but, passing these unrecognised, he approached his home by round-about and unfrequented ways, till he even reached the entrance to the dark street in which he lived. Fancying himself unobserved, he was on the point of running, when, beneath the shadow of a gateway hard by, he caught sight of the red jacket of the much-dreaded kawass. In a moment his heart sank into the calves of his

legs. He attempted to start forward, but his boots were of lead ; the kawass was coming down on him rapidly, flourishing the order for his custody. His house was but a few yards further, and already were the kohl-tinted eyes of his better-half smiling sweetly from the carved wood lattice, on her returning lord. He tried to run faster, but he caught his foot, and would have fallen, had he not been arrested by the firm grip of his enemy. The finale to his day-dreams was always the same ; he saw himself overwhelmed in a perfect tornado of bastinado-ings, the whole atmosphere teeming with kawasses of every shade of ferocity.

After bestowing as much sympathy as we could screw out of our hearts, at so short a notice, on our quondam-servant, he told us that there was only one way of escape for him, viz.—that if we would draw out on paper a declaration to the effect that he (Ibrahim) had made a full confession of all his crimes, had promised to be better for the future, and that he had gone down on his knees to be taken back again, yet, in the face of all this, we had refused, thinking we could do very well without him ; and that if we would have the kindness to append our signatures to this document in the presence of the “most just” the Cadi of Assouan, and would in the end present him

(Ibrahim) with it, all would be right. Of course, to all this we gave our ready assent; and having drawn up the declaration, away we all went, dragoman, boatmen, reises, second reises, a host of small Egyptians, and semi-nude Nubians—and in fact the whole population of Syene, who had by degrees collected round our boat to know what was up—away we all went to the Cadí.

Beneath a heavily foliaged acacia outside his house, and sipping his morning coffee from a silver fingan, reposed the most potent the Cadí of Assouan. Grouped gracefully around him, stood his numerous pipe-bearers and sherbet-mixers. As we approached, the old man rose, and, standing bare-footed on his carpet, made his most respectful salaams, not to us—but to our pockets. We could see it at a glance; we knew that if justice was to be had, we should have it; and we admired him for it. He motioned us to the divan on his right; the prospect of some dollars made him smile sweetly upon us—so he ordered pipes and coffee. Then came a pause, during which we puffed away in silence, and the whole of Assouan squatted on their haunches, to watch the proceedings.

After a few modest compliments, to the effect that my friend and I looked like two full moons on a

clear night, and that he looked far more splendid, and was more to be feared than the sun in its meridian heat, we proceeded to business. Ibrahim led off with “the ace of trumps :” throwing himself on his face, he rubbed his nose in the dust, beneath the feet of the Cadi, and addressed him as the ancestor of as yet some unborn Egyptian viceroy. We felt that we had lost a trick—but then there were the dollars. In a burst of eloquence Ibrahim told his story ; how that he had left all he held dear in Cairo, and had wandered far from home in our service ; how that his only thought had been for our good ; how that, notwithstanding all his efforts to please, he had met with nothing but abuse, till at last his wretched brain had well-nigh given way ; and how that, when we had brought him to the last stage of misery, we had kicked him savagely from our boat, leaving him with his trunk in a wild spot, to be robbed and murdered by the first passer-by ; and how that, if Allah, in his goodness, had not taken care of him, he would not have been there to tell his tale of woe.

His melancholy narrative caused quite a sensation : the whole of Assouan groaned, and voted us brutes. Even the Cadi for a moment seemed to forget the dollars, and to sympathise with Ibrahim, who stood like a sorrowing Rachel before him — his turban

torn from his head in the excess of his grief—his long horse-tail of hair streaming down his back, giving him the appearance of a wild Indian, in a Damascus sash and baggy breeches. Even we felt disposed to say, “Well, well, we didn’t mean to use you so badly as, it seems, we have done.”

But before either the Cadí, or we, had time to give way to our feelings, there rose up one, Antonio, a Greek, dragoman to our Polish friends, a man cunning in speech, and of many and subtle arguments. In a short and pithy harangue, he completely engaged the hearts of all present in our favour; declared he had known Ibrahim from a boy; how that he was a rascal, and an excessively stupid one; how that he loved “hasheesh” better than his master’s interests; how that we had taken all his stupidity and insolence, till we could take them no longer; and then, with a well-timed allusion to the fact of such nice gentlemen as we were, “with such lots of dollars,” being exposed to all the annoyance that Ibrahim gave us, he left us in the hands of the good Cadí.

As might have been expected, the amiable Egyptian magistrate wanted to administer a small quantum of bastinado on the spot, and to write a letter to the Cadí in Cairo, with a request that the

dose might be repeated as soon as Ibrahim landed in his native city. This, however, we would not allow: it was enough for us to know that the dismissal from our service was approved of — and, this point settled, we proposed to give him the paper already spoken of, by the signing of which all future punishment on our account would be prevented. When it became known to the crowd, that two Christians were capable of such leniency, great was the applause that we elicited ; and after taking leave of the Cadi, with the usual fees, we retired to our boat amid loud cries of — “ Long live the two howling Christian dogs, who have interceded for a Mussulman that deserves the bastinado ! ”

CHAP. XIII.

THE CATARACTS.

AND now behold us arrived at the furthest extremes of the land of Egypt, moored to the bank beneath the palms of Assouan. No sooner was it noised about that we intended to ascend the Cataracts, and to push our flight still southward among the Nubian Temples, than all our happiness for the space of twenty-four hours was gone. From sunrise to sunset were we engaged in conferences and quarrels with every species of the human race—each one proving, beyond a doubt, whenever he could get our ear, that he, and he only, was the “Rapid Sheikh,” the “Cataract Captain,” by whose all-potent influence we were at length to float in peace ’mid Nubian solitudes.

Deprived, though by our own will, yet still deprived of dragomanic powers, and possessed of but a few Arabic sentences, my friend and I lay on our divans beneath the awning, and wondered what we

should do. Finding that we neither could suggest anything, we clapped our hands for our pipes, and, after blowing three or four furious clouds of Latakia, we looked at each other through the smoke, and wondered still.

We knew that there was only *one* Sheikh of the Cataracts, and yet here were *four*—each surrounded with his numerous naked satellites, sitting before us on the deck of our boat, sipping our coffee and smoking our chibouques—each one swearing by his turban that he only was the “Simon pure.” If one had been better dressed than the other, or had had more servants round him, it would have been an easy matter enough; we should have chosen him, nor would our conclusion have been questioned for a moment in the mind of an Eastern. But here they were, all four arrayed in an equally gorgeous manner, not a whit was one man’s turban better than another’s, and each could show the same number of body-guard:—so we smoked and puffed, and puffed and smoked, and still lay on our divans wondering.

And so the morning passed, till noon arrived, and it became so hot, even under the awning, that we could bear it no longer: so we kicked the four great

sheikhs out of our boat, and said we should return to Cairo, instead of mounting the rapids.

Left once more to ourselves, we retired to the cabin, and sent for the reis. With the help of a dictionary, and a book entitled "Arabic made easy," we held a debate as to the course we should pursue. Our anger was a little roused by the reis telling us, with a knowing smile, that we had done right in refusing to have anything to do with our four morning visitors, for that neither of them was the real sheikh. And yet he had sat by all the time, a calm witness to our dilemma, without telling us this before. However, we contented ourselves with telling him in English that he was a blockhead, and then asked him in Arabic, if he knew where to find *the* sheikh?

Lowering his voice to a whisper, and coming close to us, to make his information of greater apparent value, he said, "O Howadji, give heed unto the words that I am about to utter! During forty years has Allah, in his goodness, permitted me to drink of the waters of the Nile, and during the half of that period have I steered boats in safety between its banks; therefore, O traveller, believe that I know all about this matter. The true and only sheikh of the Cataracts lives in his own village of

Mahratta in Nubia, about two hours' journey from Assouan—a man with a beard like Mahomet's, and possessed of many pipes and sherbet bowls. If the Howadji please, I will put on my whitest turban, and will go this day to visit him in his house; and there, telling him that two English Howadji are waiting to pass the Cataracts, he will return with me, and will make the price here for his assistance; and then the Howadji will get to Nubia very quickly, and will give their servant the reis good *bucksheesh* for what he has done."

"Drowning men will catch at a straw;" so we caught at the proposition of our reis, and bundled him off on the spot to Mahratta, himself and turban balancing themselves with difficulty on the staggering hind-quarters of a very second-rate Jerusalem pony.

While we sit in the blue cabin, awaiting for the sheikh, let us look in one of the many books that line our shelves, and learn something of Assouan, the ancient Syene.

Of the old town there is very little remaining, save a few granite columns of quite a late date, and a dilapidated portico, upon which the names of Nero and Domitian occur. Syene formed the boundary fortress to the Roman dominions in Egypt, though

they always looked upon Lower Ethiopia as belonging to them.

Opposite to the modern town of Assouan, or Eswán, is the island of Elephantiné. Here also stood a Roman fortress and buildings, it is said, of equal grandeur and extent to those at Philæ, but of which no traces remain. A granite gateway of the time of Alexander, standing not far from the water's edge, would seem to have once served as the entrance to some edifice now entirely destroyed; and very near to it is a mutilated statue of red granite.

The south part of the island is covered with the ruins of old houses and pottery fragments, upon many of which are still to be traced Greek inscriptions in a running hand. Nor will the traveller wander long among the palms and underwood of Elephantiné without encountering sundry one-eyed children, who, leaving their goats to stray where they will, come to offer all sorts of antiquities for sale—small bronzes of rams, coins, &c.

But, apart from all traces of dead Psammiticus and by-gone Roman days, Syene is clothed with an interest which had been growing daily more awful in our minds since leaving Cairo.

All the way from Boulak, we had read, talked,

and sung of the Nubian Cataracts. As we sailed up the river we had watched from day to day the Arabian mountains, which rose afar off in the east and in the west, silent monarchs of their own desert solitudes, at first so distant as to be hardly discernible through the thick air of noon, but daily approaching nearer to the river as we went on our voyage. At Osioot they were within a ride; at Thebes they almost shook hands with us; still on we went, and still the great barren mountains came closer and closer, till at Assouan they met—and then came the struggle.

The great Nile, which had rolled with increasing volume hundreds of miles down from Abyssinian heights, seemed to laugh at the thought of being checked in its onward course here at Assouan; and with a roar which it has kept up for ages without cessation, it threw itself wildly against the dark sides of the mountains of Arabia. No doubt, in times gone by, times which would have been looked upon by the great Rameses as ancient, the battle was a fierce one; but the river was not to be beaten, and it forced for itself a passage to the sea. The mountains, obliged to give in, would seem to have set their faces against its entering Egypt calmly and serenely; and, if the Howadji choose, he may

donkey quietly to Mahratta, and thence view the great river sweeping swiftly round the isle of Philæ, and go leaping madly, like the rush of disordered cavalry, among the black piles of porphyry and shattered crags, which lie heaped about in wild confusion nearly all the way to Syene.

Curious to know something of the dangers that we were shortly to face, my friend and I one sunny morning, during our sojourn at Assouan—for this “Rapid-mounting” we found to be anything but what the phrase would lead one to understand—donkeyed pleasantly from among the ruins of Syene, and, passing many picturesque sheikh tombs, we rode across the intervening desert to Mahratta. Here, leaving our animals and their attendants, we climbed to the summit of the loftiest rock, and gazed in mute astonishment upon the chaotic scene around us. Looking southward, we followed the course of the river, and saw it afar off among Nubian reaches come rolling swiftly but silently to the fray. At Philæ it seemed to scent the battle, and gave forth its roar of defiance. Round the base of the crag on which we stood, it came rushing with fearful velocity; and then, for one short moment, as if to collect all its force, it paused, hanging on the verge of the slope—but it was only momentary;

for in the next minute we saw it go leaping and tumbling among the rocks, which strove in vain to check its will. Lost now to our view among the mountains, we descended again into Mahratta, and were soon donkeying back across the desert—at intervals, the savage but distant roar of the Cataract breaking upon the solitudes among which we rode.

But all this time I have left untold the result of our reis's expedition to Mahratta, in search of the "real" sheikh. As we had been led to hope, his mission in his best turban proved successful; for he returned that same evening to Assouan, accompanied by a venerable old man, whom he introduced to us as "the true and only sheikh of the Cataracts." The lanterns were lighted and hung beneath the awning, our brightest carpet was spread upon the deck, coffee was handed, chibouques were brought, and, whilst the pure stars of Egypt looked down upon us, we settled (in anticipation) the business of the Cataracts.

Without entering into the particulars of an agreement which took an hour to draw up, and which might with ease have been done in five minutes, I shall cut the matter short by saying, that everything *was* arranged most satisfactorily in whispers and

short sentences, clouds of Latakia throwing a delightful mystery over the whole !

“ We were to start the first thing in the morning; we were to ” . . . here the old man’s voice dropped so low that we were obliged to bend forward to listen—“ we were to pass the Cataracts in ” . . . here again we lost his words—“ in ” . . . we slipped two dollars into his hand—“ in one day.” The reis laughed and said “ Taib,” all the crew laughed and said “ Taib” in unison, and from out our very hearts we laughed and said, “ Good ! ”

CHAP. XIV.

PHILÆ.

As the commencement of the Rapids was distant some three or four miles from Assouan, and we expected a great deal of time would be wasted in getting there, we rose with the first streak of daylight, and leaving directions with the reis not to ascend them without us, and that we would meet him at the first "gate," as the several falls are termed, we rode off to Philæ, intending to saunter about among its ruined temples till noon.

Warmly and cheerfully streamed the sun's morning rays, as we donkeyed over the desert to Philæ. Philæ, beautiful, as its name imports, is an island above the Cataracts, its only inhabitants some graceful temples, standing almost entire 'mid forests of erect and prostrate columns. From the mainland we were ferried across by some naked Nubian boys in a doubtful old tub, meant to represent a boat.

Bidding them await our return, we pushed our way from the water's edge up the steep bank, through the thick brush-wood and flowering lupins, which grew luxuriantly beneath the overhanging palms. The surface of the island is a mass of ruins, and chiefly are they dedicated to Isis. The sculptures on the principal building have reference to the birth of Horus, who, with his parents, Isis and Osiris, formed the triad worshipped at Philæ.

Standing on the summit of one of the temple's lofty propylons, and gazing down into the river as it rushed swiftly and deeply by towards the Cataracts, we were pleased in recalling the tradition that tells of the battle between Osiris and the great Typhoo, and how that Osiris, being vanquished, lies buried in the Cataract, giving rise to the Egyptian oath, "By him who sleeps in Philæ."

The traveller will do well to linger long among the temples and flowers of Philæ. If he is a draughtsman, he will wander among its court-yards, palms, and columns, hour after hour, in sweet bewilderment, not knowing what most to admire—all is so very beautiful. It was with almost sad hearts that we, towards noon, once more entered the boat that had brought us, and were ferried back to Mahratta, in order to rejoin our Dahabieh; but we

solaced ourselves with the hope of spending another morning there, on our return from Nubia.

Half-an-hour's donkey-riding brought us to the first "gate," as it is called, of the Cataract. Here we found our boat, as had been agreed, waiting for us. Trusting we had not delayed them by lingering too long at Philæ, we made haste to go on board, fondly hoping that we should at once commence ascending the rapids; but, to our surprise, we found that the most noble the "real sheikh" had gone off home, with all his men—nor did they propose returning till the morrow. In anger we sent for the reis, and in the Arabic tongue furiously, but sadly incorrectly, addressed him, "Moosh taib ya Reis, why are we not struggling up the Cataract, instead of lying moored at its foot?" "Let not the Frank's anger grow hot," answered the reis; "for it is not the fault of his servant, but the will of Allah. We left Assouan this morning in time to have been sailing among the Nubian mountains by sun-set; but the boat must have been afflicted with the 'evil eye,' for sailing first against this rock, and then against that rock, and sometimes sticking fast altogether, it has come to pass that we have arrived at the first 'gate' all too late to go up to-day: but let the Frank eat his dinner, smoke his pipe, and go

to bed, and on the morrow he shall ascend the Cataracts faster and better than did ever Frank before." Making a virtue of necessity, we told the reis that, considering the circumstances of the case, we would eat our dinner and smoke our pipes this evening contentedly; but that we should certainly expect to clear the Cataracts on the morrow.

With the first dawn of day, down came the old sheikh and his servants, to the number of about a hundred, all smiles and morning salaams. Fortunately for us, a favourable wind had sprung up during the night, and had gone on increasing, till, by sun-rise, it blew great guns, which, as we were to ascend by sheer force, proved of no small assistance to us.

Before proceeding to work, the sheikh mounted to the top of our cabin, and thence addressed his men to the effect of their showing a couple of Franks how they could handle a boat up a rapid, and by their efforts to prove themselves *and him* worthy of an enormous *bucksheesh*, &c. With a loud shout of applause, the hundred black satellites pitched off their kaftans, or loose blue shirts, and in a state of nature jumped forthwith into the foaming waters. Holding two long ropes—attached to either side of the boat,—half of them, by dint of prodigious

efforts, gained a rock on one side of the fall, whilst the other half did the same, gaining a rock on the other side. With difficulty setting our sails in the gale that was blowing, we now loosed from the bank; nor did ever man, on a thorough-bred English hunter, charge an Oxfordshire stone wall, with greater pluck and meaning, than did we in our Nile boat the first "gate" of the Nubian Cataracts.

Arrived at the foot of the fall, we remained motionless: our poor craft for a moment staggered beneath the weight of the waters which rushed in heavy volume over her bows. Had the wind lulled for an instant, or the men relapsed their hold of the ropes, we should have swung round with frightful rapidity, and been carried, Goodness knows where—but certainly not up the rapid. Some of our own sailors here leaped into the water, and, with their backs against the side of the boat, whilst the men on the rocks hauled at the ropes, literally lifted her half-way up the fall. The hundred naked savages, yelling and shouting, leaped again into the water: now, with their ropes, they gained some other rocks more in advance; now again did our sailors put their backs to the boat, and again with renewed energy did the hundred naked savages shout and haul at

the ropes, till at length we floated in safety above the fall. Before the current could carry us back again, we were secured firmly to the nearest rock, and my friend and I were chuckling over our successful ascent of the first gate of the Cataracts.

After allowing the sheikh and his men half-an-hour's rest, we proceeded to the charge of the second gate, about half-a-mile further up. Not being so rapid a one as the first, we accomplished this more easily; and then, glancing upwards at the sun, we wondered whether we should be able to ascend the two remaining gates, and so to enter Nubia before it set. Our doubts upon this point were completely set at rest, by presently observing the sheikh and his satellites slipping on their kaftans, and by twos and threes scampering off among the rocks towards their village. Jumping up on to the top of the cabin, we shouted after them for a long time in vain; but at length succeeded in bringing back the sheikh, with a countenance expressing the most perfect ignorance of what we could want. To our question of why he was leaving us in the middle of the Cataracts, instead of taking us up in one day as he had promised, he replied, "Let not the Frank's anger grow hot: does he not know that this day is the Mussulman sabbath? Even now is not the cry

of the Mueddin sounding from the minaret, calling us to mid-day prayer? And would the Christian have us work, when Allah bids us pray?"

Viewing the question in this light, we could not do otherwise than request the pious sheikh to be sure and come down to us the first thing in the morning—and so he left us: nor would I do violence to his character by raising the question, "Whether he spent the rest of the day in the mosque, or at home on the divan with his chibouque and harem?"

All the afternoon the wind blew fearfully from the desert, bringing with it such clouds of hot sand that we were forced to retreat to our cabins for shelter; and even there, though we closed all the windows and locked the doors, was nothing free from its gritty influence.

Before closing our eyes in sleep for the second time 'mid the Cataract's roar, my friend and I asked each other one question, "Why did that holy sheikh receive the two dollars? Was it not in earnest of our passing the Cataracts in one day?" But there lay a mystery, even such an one as was not to be solved.

The whole of the next morning, from sunrise, was spent in passing the two remaining gates; and

an hour after noon we floated safely upon the Nile in Nubia.

The first thing to be done was to clear our boat of the swarms of naked Cataract men, who refused to leave us until we complied with their demands for a *bucksheesh* in addition to their pay. In vain we remonstrated with them, reminding them that it had only been promised on condition of our being passed in one day — nothing but a *bucksheesh* would satisfy them — and a *bucksheesh* of the most extensive kind they declared they would have. As they seemed averse to reason, we were obliged to have recourse to foul means. Retiring to our cabins, as if for the money, we armed ourselves with a couple of kurbashes, and then, suddenly rushing out upon them, we laid about us with right good will; and seizing some of the lightly made ones round the waist, we literally pitched them into the river. Our *ruse* had its desired effect; for within a few minutes our boat was surrounded with black heads, all making for the shore, whilst we were at liberty to pursue our voyage in peace — but no, not yet — for we presently perceived that there was one great strapping fellow left. The moment my friend saw him, he made at him with his kurbash in the air. The Nubian gentleman, divining his kind intentions,

turned to flee, and was in the act of springing into the river, when the well-directed foot of my friend lent him such powerful assistance, as considerably facilitated his intended exit. But for three long weeks after did my friend limp disconsolately on one leg ; for, in the act of kicking the Nubian, he had quite overlooked the fact of his feet being armed with nothing more substantial than a pair of yellow kid Turkish slippers.

CHAP. XV.

NUBIA.

As in Egypt, so in Nubia, was “*Bucksheesh, ya Howadji*” the sole sound—save the sigh of the sakia, and the creek of the shadoof, that greeted us as we sailed up the river, or strolled along its banks. --- Intoned in a far stouter, manlier voice than in Egypt, we felt that here we had entered upon a different scene; — farewell for a time to veils and sore eyes. So different to the country we had just left, there was an air of cleanliness and, of necessity, greater comfort, hanging over the poorest of the Nubian mud villages. Heaps of grain, ready for exportation to Egypt, stood in the scrupulously swept streets: coal-black women, their faces shining with castor-oil, their noses and ears adorned with rings of silver, collected into groups beneath the village palms, and smiled on us pleasantly as we

passed, offering beads and coins for sale: crowds of small children, without a stitch of clothing, played a species of "I-spy-I" among the prickly pears, intoning the national anthem of "*Bucksheesh, ya Howadji,*" whenever our backs were turned.

In Nubia all the men bear arms, and, even when following the plough, are ever to be seen ready for action, with their spears and long guns hung cross-ways on their backs, and the shield of hippopotamus hide over the left shoulder.

In general the Nubians are much poorer than even the poor Egyptians; the young men, forsaking their household gods, go down into the land of Egypt, where they spend the best of their days in scraping together a small heap of piastres, with which they at length return, and, investing their hardly-earned and scanty fortune in a sakia, they idle away the remainder of their lives listening to its drone and creak, as it is slowly turned from sunrise to sunset by a couple of sleepy oxen.

On the evening of the day which saw us through the Cataracts, we moored beneath the palms of Kallasheh, a distance of forty-four miles from Assouan. Here, as there is another rapid, though small and insignificant in the extreme, when compared to the one we had passed, we were compelled to stop for

the night; and the next morning, by the time we had surmounted its tiny dangers, the fresh breeze which had favoured us for the last week had left us entirely.

In a dead calm, my friend and I got into the small boat, and pulled on ahead, in order to visit the Temples of "Bayt-el-Welled" and "Kalabshel." Our boat fastened to the bank, we clambered up the hot, glaring rocks to the former of these, in which we were much disappointed, as Sir Gardner Wilkinson makes a great deal of it. It is very small, consisting of but two small chambers hewn out of the solid face of the rock: the larger of these, which can scarcely be distinguished by the epithet of "hall," is supported by two columns of a very ancient mould, reminding one of the simplicity of the Greek Doric. At the upper end are two niches, each containing three sitting figures in high relief; and on the walls of the area outside are sculptured in a very beautiful manner the victories of the great Rameses.

Hard at work, with cartridge-paper, brushes, and water, we found two English gentlemen engaged in taking impressions from the area walls, of the battles of the old Egyptian monarch. The younger of these I saw a good deal of afterwards, I regret

to say, owing to a very severe, in fact narrowly escaping a fatal, accident at Sinai, as he was on his way to Jerusalem, by the long desert, after returning from Nubia. After a short conversation, we left them still at work, and descended to visit the Kalabsheh Temple.

These are ruins of the largest temple in Nubia, but of a much later date than the small one we had just left. Sir Gardner says, "It appears to have been built in the reign of Augustus; and though other Cæsars, particularly Caligula, Trajan, and Severus, made considerable additions to the sculptures, it was left unfinished. The stones employed in its construction had belonged to an older edifice, to which it succeeded; and it is highly probable that the original temple was of the early epoch of the third Thothmes, whose name is still traced on a granite statue lying near the quay before the entrance."

We spent the greater part of the morning exploring its numerous halls, chambers, and staircases, and then returned to our boat, which we found surrounded with a quantity of Nubian girls, who had come down to the river with their stone jars for water. All Nile travellers will not fail to remember the simplicity of the Nubian girl's attire,

consisting merely in a broad belt of leather cut into innumerable strips, adorned with coloured beads and small shells. As we approached they drew off to a distance ; but, gradually taking courage, they again gathered round our boat, thus giving us an opportunity for practising our Arabic with them. One of them seemed much amused at my telling her that her mode of dress was far from expensive. After a few words of consultation with the rest, she asked me what I would give her for her only garment. I offered two piastres (fourpence) : with a merry laugh, she said, if I would make it *four*, she would sell it to me ; so, placing four piastres in one of her out-stretched hands, with the other she proceeded without the least hesitation to disrobe herself, and I was made the possessor of a Nubian “full-dress,” shells, beads, and all *et ceteras*, for the small sum of eightpence !

On the afternoon of this day (*February 1st*) we passed the Tropic of Cancer, over against the Temple of Dendouah. The wind, which had carried us so gloriously up the Rapids of Syene, had quite left us, a broiling sun was above us, our poor sails hung faint and motionless from the yards ; indeed, with little to see and nothing to shoot, the majority of our Nubian days passed hotly and heavily.

Instead of shouldering my gun after breakfast, as in Egypt, I used to stick a camel's hair brush between each of my fingers, and, with the help of Newman's colours, and a glass of Nile water, commit to paper the different reaches of the river, as it flows through Nubia. Entirely ignorant of the requisite colours for landscape painting when I left London, I now found to my sorrow that I had not been happy in my choice ; and, without being able to avoid it, I was obliged to put in all my skies with "Prussian," instead of "Nubian" blue.

The scenery, this side of the first Cataracts, is quite different, and far more beautiful than in Egypt. Rocky mountains lie heaped about in grand confusion along the river's banks, all the way to Wady Halfa, leaving but a sorry slip of land for cultivation — for all the region beyond the great sandstone mountains belongs to the desert ; in fact, a Nubian's landed property possesses much the appearance of a small garden on an English railway-embankment, cultivated by the industry of a country station-master, and in which, as he says, "he just grows a cabbage or two :" but so few are the wants of a Nubian, that he seldom suffers from poverty.

A man's wealth indicates itself by his owning

more sakias than his neighbour. These water-wheels are more frequent in Nubia than in Egypt; and, as they never see grease, they soothe the Howadji with their soporific drone, whilst he floats up the river tranced by a tropical sun. Seldom more than three or four hundred yards apart, their song never leaves him; for faintly as the sound of one dies away in the distance, he sails within hearing of another: sometimes a third will intervene on the opposite bank; and, as his boat floats gently into the delta of sound, each sakia of a different size and tone will join in singing him a trio—a welcome to the sweetness of the south. Lying back on his divan, breathing in his inmost soul the softness of the sunset hour, the sakias will bear him aloft into dream-land, and with their distant and mysterious music will force him to hear strange sounds in Nubia. borne across the water, and mingling with the wave and rustle of the palm-leaves over-head, he will fancy himself back in England, listening to village bells across the meadows on a summer's evening. Perchance his imagination will force him to hear sounds more sweet than these. My visit to dream-land, when floating on the Nile at sunset, was spent within hearing of distant English bells; but more quickly than was:

ever message carried along electric wires was I brought back to Nubia, by the cry of "Temsak!"

Now it is not to be supposed that, because this is the first time I have alluded to the "temsa," or crocodile, I fell in with one for the first time this evening. In Egypt many a time and oft at noon-day had I watched the monsters, five or six together, lie sleeping on the long sandy strips: often had I surprised them with the pop of my rifle, but had never succeeded in doing them much harm: but now, here in Nubia, had I been summoned, with considerably more than post haste, all the way from English meadows and village bells, to look at an enormous creature, some twenty feet in length, lying asleep, not a hundred yards from us, on the low, shelving bank. My rifle, all ready loaded, was at my shoulder in a second: my friend with a telescope, to watch the effect of the bullet, requested me to be sure and hit him in the eye. One anxious moment, as I pressed the trigger, and then I fired. "Hit by Jove!" shouted my friend; and sure enough I had. The poor crocodile turned slowly on his side, raised one paw, and seemed to have expired. "Allah akber" (God is great), cried the reis and boatmen in chorus. The boat was shaken up into the wind, the sheet let go, and my friend and I were in the act of

jumping into the boat to go and fetch him, when — *mirabile dictu!* — the crocodile rolled back again on to his stomach, and committed himself to the deep. For a few minutes we paused, watching the spot where he had disappeared beneath the surface, and then again hauling in our sheet, we bore away to the south. All the Arabs declared that the creature had been hit, though I had failed in killing him. As we stood discussing the matter, each moment increasing the distance between us and the sand-bank, where we had first seen him, we observed him again rise above the water, and creep with difficulty on to the bank. Confident now that he had been wounded, and was unable to remain long below the surface, we again put our boat about, and, though at a distance of two hundred yards and more, I again levelled my rifle and fired, my friend also firing at the same moment. This time our bullets fell short, for, ploughing up the sand right under his nose, they bounded over him. Again the poor “temsak” soughed heavily into the water, and, though we gave him plenty of time again to make his appearance, we saw no more of him. A breeze springing up, a parting present from the setting sun, we shook out our sails this time in earnest, and were soon sailing many miles away from the wounded crocodile.

The crocodile is, I believe, vulnerable in only two places; the one between the fore-legs, and the other exactly in the centre of the eye. Considering this, I need hardly say that the Nile tourist seldom returns to Cairo with one as a trophy of his prowess—unless he devotes his time to it: but as we were upon the Nile for the express purpose of seeing temples, the country, and for enjoying the delicious climate, we felt that murdering crocodiles was foreign to our ideas of what was correct. If we had wished for a crocodile, I make no doubt that we could have at length obtained *this one*, by mooring our boat in the vicinity, and spending a week stalking him. As it was, we abandoned him, perhaps wounded, perhaps not hit at all, to be captured by some Howadji, who was upon the Nile for other purposes than we were.

One of the amusements during a voyage of two months on the Nile is that of saluting, whenever you meet or pass another dahabieh—a sort of “How d’ye do?” to a brother Frank in the East.

One hot sultry evening, after having tracked from sunrise to sunset, and not getting over more than ten miles of ground, or rather water, we found ourselves, as usual, moored beneath the palms ~~towards~~ towards the hour of eight. The lively rattle of

the tea-cups had just ceased, the crew had melted from singing into sleep, we were lying back on our divans dreaming over Latakia, silence reigned,—when suddenly the distant splash of oars, and the strain of an Arab boat-song broke lengthening on our ears. The reis, raising himself on one arm, and shaking back his capote from his head, listened; then murmuring to himself, “Merkeb Ingleez” (English boat), lay down again to sleep. Throwing down our pipes, we also rose up to listen: “It must be the Gordons’ boat returning from Wady Halfa,” said my friend. (The Gordons were friends of ours, whom we had not seen since leaving Cairo, as they had started a week before us, nor had we been able to overtake them.) As they were still some distance off, we agreed it would be great fun to row up the river in the small boat, under cover of the night, and dropping down upon them with the stream, to fire across their bows, and go on board in style.

“To cast off the boat, jump into her, get out the oars, and start away,” as G. P. R. James would say, “was but the work of a moment!” In a quarter of an hour we were abreast; then, putting her head round, we shot down the current, till close to them. Bang, bang! bang, bang! went our four barrels, ~~and~~ we hailed. Of course they lay to on their oars to

know what we wanted — “English boat, ahoy !” hark ! some outlandish answer ! “English boat, ahoy !” we again shouted. This time we caught it. “*Buckshcesh, Howadji!*” What trouble we had taken to hail a slave-boat dropping down the river for the next Cairo market!

The sun shines brightly in Nubia ; and this day was truly tropical, the intense brilliancy of the atmosphere clothing the desert shore on either side of us with all the verdure and luxuriance of some of the valleys of southern France. We were sailing now in that part of Nubia which goes by the name of Corusco, and here the mountains are much higher, in some instances so completely landlocking the river, as to give it the appearance of a broad sunny lake : and often to-day I could fancy myself standing on the Hotel terrace at Vevay, gazing upon the soft beauties of Geneva. But all bright days must wane, and all suns, however fair, must set ; and, as usual, to-night the pure stars looked down and saw us chatting and smoking over our much-loved tea, moored beneath the gently waving palms, whilst the crew sat in the bows, singing and thrumming the tarabuka.

Early one morning we arrived at Derr, the capital town of Nubia. Our cook Abda, being a

native of the place, and not having seen his friends since he was twelve years old, came to ask for an hour's leave to go and embrace his family. We had of course been calculating on a request of this kind; but I must say, that we were quite unprepared for the sudden blaze of splendour which burst meteor-like from behind the kitchen, in the shape of "cookie come to ask for a holiday." It would be difficult to describe his dress, inasmuch as I was so perfectly dazzled on beholding it, that all distinct recollection of it passed immediately away, leaving merely the dim outline, as of some delicious dream. What I do remember was my being almost blinded by a species of sunset, worked in gold, red, and blue thread on his silk waistcoat; a loose brigand-like jacket fizzing with embroidery was thrown with a studied negligence over one shoulder; his legs were clothed in most extensive bags of white linen, fold on fold of red silk confined the waist and supported the bags; whilst his mustachioed face reposed serenely beneath the shade of a gloriously big white turban. There was no denying anything to so princely a cook; so away he went to see his mother. I may say, that we felt not a little proud of our servant, when in the distance we saw the whole of Derr, under the palms, admiring in anywise but mute astonishment the

little nigger boy who had left them twelve years since, to seek his fortune in the land of Egypt.

Loosing from Derr, a fresh north-wester danced us merrily over the wavelets past Ibream, and continuing during the greater part of the night, we made fast the next afternoon beneath the magnificent Temple of Aboo-Simbel.

Hitherto we had been undecided as to whether we should push on to Wady Halfa and the Second Cataracts, or not; but, considering all things, the length of time we had consumed in coming so far, the shortness of my companion's leave, and many other little "heres and theres," we came to a determination this evening that the temple, beneath whose gigantic proportions we then lay moored, should be the "*ultima Thule*" of our voyage. Nor were the sailors slow in commencing to put the boat into rowing trim, when we made known to them our mind. They seemed only too rejoiced to be on their way back to their friends in Cairo.

We sought the sweet south no more; and under the bluff headland of Aboo-Simbel, whilst the crew are stripping our bark of all its beauty, and converting it into a sort of floating hulk, we climb the rock to dive into the adytum of the temple, by far the most splendid and most interesting of all the

ruins of Nubia, and, excepting Thebes, in the whole Nile valley.

It consists of two buildings, both fronting the river, and carved in the face of the rock. They date from the period of Rameses the Great; and the countless frescoes with which their walls are decorated throw great light on the history of that conqueror. As façades, they have colossal figures in high relief, but those on the larger and southernmost of the twain are the more splendid. They are four in number, seated on thrones, and are supposed to be life-portraits of the great Rameses. Their faces are still in nearly as good preservation as the day on which they bade adieu to the chisel of the sculptor, and evince a sweetness and beauty of expression, the more striking as it is unlooked for in figures of such dimensions. Their height, not including their pedestals, is about sixty feet, and the total height of the façade about ninety-five feet.

The entrance is so choked up with sand that, to effect an ingress, we were forced to lie flat on our faces, and to crawl in by inches. By this time the sun had sunk beneath the horizon, so that we were deprived of the little light which manages to creep in here by day; in darkness the most profound we groped our way into the temple; and almost breath-

less to know by what magnificences we were surrounded, we waited whilst the Arabs, heaping some logs together, prepared and lighted an enormous fire. In a few minutes we were enabled to discover ourselves standing in a superb hall, supported by eight osiride columns; and as the flames shot upwards, reddening the grim countenances of Athor, with which each column was surmounted, the effect produced was truly grand.

Leaving this hall, we passed with our torches through a double door-way into a second hall, smaller than the first, and supported on four square pillars. To this succeeded a corridor, which brought us into the adytum, with two chambers, one on either side. In the centre of the adytum is an altar; and at the upper end are four sitting statues in relief. The paintings are all historical, relating to the conquests of Rameses. We returned to our boat by starlight, and, as we sat as usual over our tea, we discussed the glory of departed Rameses, whose endless victories we had seen depicted on the walls of his temple.

The next morning, whilst the crew finished their hulk arrangements, we climbed the steep sand-bank once more to look upon what we should probably never see again.

It was seven o'clock, and the sun, fairly risen, rested with rosy splendour upon the huge, but

beyond description soft, faces of the *colossi*, where there, in solitary grandeur, they had sat presiding for more than two thousand years over the almost death-like stillness of Nubia. Hour after hour did we look and linger, sketching and lingering still, tranced in the sunshine and far-off murmuring sakias ; and, gazing up at Aboo-Simbel, how precious became those last few moments of farewell !

Though we had been schooling our minds, we found it hard to bid adieu for ever to the sweet south and the majestic beauties of the Nubian temple ! — “ O Aboo-Simbel, monarch of Ethiopian wilds, how can this be done ? ” — were the words that burst from our full hearts — “ how can we bid thee a long, a last farewell ? ” — Then pulling our hats over our eyes, that we might be tempted no further, we rushed down to the river, and, jumping into our boat, pushed off and fled away northwards.

CHAP. XVI.

MUTINY OF THE CREW.

LONG enough have I lingered over the narration of our upward Nile voyage; but the stream will carry us through the Cataracts, and back again to Cairo, in far quicker time than it took us to struggle up against its never-ceasing influence.

We left Aboo-Simbel at noon, and, floating down against a fresh north-wester all that day and through the night, we found ourselves the next morning off Derr, where the river takes a completely opposite course to the south, as far as Corusco, a distance of twelve miles.

As the black cook wished to take another peep at his friends, we gave him leave to pull on ahead in the small boat, telling him that we would give him an hour's grace, and that we would wait for him on the opposite side of the river beneath the Temple of A'mada. It was a very sultry morning, and we as usual were reclining on our divans, feeling fit for little else than smoking and building castles on no

surer foundations than the Latakia clouds which floated circling upwards from our pipe bowls, when our boat suddenly standing in for the town, we found we had energy enough left to ask the reason of its so doing. "To wait for the cook," said the reis. We then explained that we wished to moor on the opposite side, in order to visit the temple; for we knew that if we paused near the town all the men would be wanting to go ashore to the bazaars, and so delay us in a spot where we had no wish to waste more time than was necessary. "But," said the reis, "I wish to stop here." "And," said we, "we wish particularly to stop beyond the town." During this discussion — a most animated one — the men lay on their oars, not knowing what to do. "Stop!" said the reis. "Pull!" said we. "Stop!" roared the reis. By Jupiter! our wrath now rose, and we both sprang on deck. The mustāmel, or steersman, was putting *up* the tiller in obedience to the reis; we told him to put it *down*; he refused. My friend now climbing up to where he stood, pushed the man aside, and took the tiller himself; whilst I stood by, prepared for squalls.

Matters continued thus for a minute, when the reis took upon himself the initiative. Leaving his seat on the bows, he came aft, and approached with

savage aspect my friend, who was now holding the tiller in one hand, and a kurbash in the other. Here was an opening for me ; so running quickly behind the reis, whose eyes were fixed upon my friend, I placed my hands on his shoulders, and twisted him over on to his back. How long I could have held him in this position, I am not able to say ; for some of the other men, taking his part, attacked me, whilst the rest of the crew pitched into my friend.

To say the least, we found ourselves awkwardly situated ; far away from the haunts of civilisation, and among a set of men who hated the very sight of us, being Christians. The moment the reis found himself freed from my grasp, he was upon his legs, and before I could possibly prevent him, he seized me round the throat, and began to push me towards the edge of the boat. Unable to stand against the sudden attack, I expected every moment to feel myself immersed in the swift waters of the Nile ; when some of the crew, thinking that the matter was going too far, interfered, and, at last, with difficulty, made him let go his hold. All this time my friend with his kurbash had had enough to do to defend the tiller, of which I perceived, now that I was once more free, that he was still the possessor.

At this point there came a pause, and, on looking

round, we found that we were divided into two parties, some taking part with us, but the greater number with the reis. Bethinking ourselves of a stratagem, we once more advanced to the fray, shouting the word "*Bucksheesh!*" As we expected, the whole of the opposite side came over to us with one accord, leaving the poor reis to answer for himself. Here was a triumph for us, and all through the utterance of that single word "*Bucksheesh*" — that word, whose silver tones prove ever too much for the nerves of an Arab.

The reis finding himself "sold," as the expression is, was nearly mad with rage, and, seizing his bundle, declared he would leave us. "Very well," said we, "go along with you; we do very well without a dragoman; and doubtless can dispense with your sweet face." — So away went the reis ashore, wading and swearing up to his knees.

Having thus got rid of another impediment to our happiness on the Nile, we drifted placidly across the river, and soon after lay swinging in the calm beneath a palm-tree, alongside another boat, the owners of which were examining the same ruins for which we were bound. Sheltered by our umbrellas, for the heat was intense, we wandered from the river across the intervening sand-plain, to the temple.

The parties who were busily engaged in making a note of the interesting sculptures on its walls, we had often met during our voyage, and whose peculiarities we had as often amused ourselves with criticising. They were three in number: one gentleman, not very learned, but who was blessed with a wife who was pre-eminently so; and these two were accompanied by a friend with a prodigious beard, whose lore exceeded in an infinite degree the total amount of that possessed by the married couple. When first we fell in with them we had concluded that the bearded one was the husband of the learned lady; indeed, we had gone so far as to suppose that the first gentleman was their European courier, who, finding himself among Arabs and hieroglyphics, had relapsed into a nonentity, smoking his pipe in silence, and longing for the day when his star should again be in the ascendant among hotels and picture-galleries.

What a mistake we had made the reader is now aware! But was it not strange that we ever should have fallen into such an error? I remember that morning as we approached the ruins we stumbled upon the should-be husband, sitting pensively, I almost think he was sad, in the shade of the portico of A'mada; and in answer to our inquiry after his

health, he waved his hand over his shoulder with the words, "They are in there." Poor man! we left him in the portico and entered the first small chamber, where, nothing daunted by the stifling heat and confined atmosphere, the learned pair were hammering away with damp hair brushes upon reams of cartridge paper spread over the sculptured walls. Since arriving in England I have heard that a great work is shortly to appear, compiled by their joint labours. The heavier and more scientific portions from the brain of the bearded one, whilst the lighter touches are to be filled in by the fair but little less learned fingers of the lady. I have but one hope, and that is that in the preface at least they will sufficiently eulogise the less gifted gentleman, who, though he was "by way" of being the husband, played third party to such perfection.

On returning to our boat and finding that the cook had not yet made his appearance, we loosed from the bank, as we were anxious to arrive at Corusco before sunset, in order to witness its effect on Nubian scenery from the summit of one of the many mountains in the vicinity.

As we floated down with the stream, we harangued the men on the exceeding wickedness of their late conduct, in taking part with the reis against us; but

they did not seem fully to comprehend its extent until we reminded them that *he* would not be likely ever to reward their allegiance with a *bucksheesh* worth the having—if any at all.

Arrived at Corusco, we moored to the bank, to wait for the cook, whom we had left behind to follow in the small boat, no very arduous undertaking, even for a distance of twelve miles, when the force of the stream was considered. And then, as we were in good time, we commenced to scale the craggy sides of the loftiest mountain within reach, in order to feast our eyes on sunset glories.

Words, time, and my own powers of description would fail me, were I to attempt to give a faithful account of what I saw from the heights of Corusco. Turning to the east—for it was not the river with its waving palms, nor the Nubian villages encircled with their tiny cornfields, nor the softly receding beauties of the sweet south, that made us almost hold our breath as we stood—but, turning to the east, we lifted our eyes from Corusco and gazed over the desert ocean towards Kossayr and the coasts of the Red Sea. It seemed as if in time past some tremendous convulsion of nature had rent and torn into a thousand huge fragments the whole surface of the land, as far as the eye could reach. The scene

was one of the wildest confusion, all scorched and black, with here and there great masses of crimson granite, which towered up from the dark desert depths, like mighty headlands on a stormy night, about whose bases raged midnight waves. Down among those mysterious and awful solitudes Dante might have pitched his tent, and there, his mind attuned to the mystic scene around him, he might have conceived and written his "Hell."

Already had darkness spread over the face of the earth, when we commenced our precipitous and somewhat hazardous descent. In due time, however, we reached the plain, and, guided by the distant lights of our boat, we managed to steer ourselves in safety to the river's edge. As we drew near we were surprised by the sound of many voices in violent altercation; and, in descending the steep bank, we bruised our shins most provokingly by stumbling over a lot of boxes, canteens, bedding, &c. Words in the boat ran so high, that at first our shouts of "Ya Sulimān! ya Mohammad! hāt el fanōōse *!" were unheard. When at last they became aware of our presence, they all came tumbling up the bank, each one trying to seize our hands, and each one clamorous with his own tale.

* "O Suliman! O Mohammad! bring a light!"

As we were not yet very strong in Arabic, it was long before we could catch the drift of what it was all about. It seemed that the cook and the reis (who, by the way, had deemed it advisable to return) had arrived during our absence, and, very wrath at their pull, had been abusing the poor crew, who had acted under our orders in continuing on to Corusco. Of course, they got as good as they gave, and the upshot was, that the cook had got a good drubbing. The removal of his effects from the boat to the bank was merely a little tragic scene, got up in order to enlist our sympathies in his behalf; for he declared he could not possibly stay after the rough handling he had received.

Now, seeing that Abda was the most useful man in the boat, we were obliged to humour him a little. So, telling him just to put his boxes back again, for that we could not think of dispensing with his valuable services until safe in Cairo, and that we hoped one day to reward all his exertions for our happiness with a handsome *bucksheesh*, we managed to put things straight.

Once more loosing from the bank, we floated down towards Assouan, and thus ended this noisy day: but the Howadji had slumbered, and woke, and slept again, lulled in their dreams by the crew, as they

rowed and sung far into the night, before they lost all recollection of their morning's battle, and the sunset that they had witnessed from the mountains of Corusco.

On the morning of the third day after this we came again in sight of our much-loved Isle of Philæ: and whilst the reis arranged matters for descending the Cataracts, we hurried off in the small boat for the last time to do homage to its ruined temples, the never to be forgotten tokens of a departed age.

When we returned to Mahratta, we found to our great joy that all was ready, and that they only waited for us, instantly to commence the descent to Assouan. Pushing off from the shore, we moved slowly out into the stream, the speed with which we slipped along increasing, as once more the ceaseless roar of the falling waters broke upon our ears. Two men to an oar, and four at the tiller, with difficulty preventing our craft from whirling round in the eddies which beset us, we rushed swiftly towards the first gate. At a signal all the oars were shipped, and the river, like some huge monster beneath us, went plunging along, with us on his back, till, arrived at the brow of the currenty slope, he leaped headlong with us down among the boiling waters.

For a moment all was confusion before our eyes:

we felt the spray in showers against our faces ; and if we had not taken a firm hold of the small wooden columns which formed the portico of the cabin, goodness knows but we might have been pitched out among the great black rocks, through whose passes we were charging downwards. Hardly, however, had fear taken possession of our minds before all was over, and, swerving to the left, we drove high upon the sandy shore. All the men jumping up from their seats made at us, leaping and shouting to kiss our hands, amid cries of “Great is Allah ! for he hath preserved the Franks through the worst gate of the Cataracts !” Above the river’s din rose their voices, chanting their own praises, and how that they certainly deserved a most extraordinary *bucksheesh* to reward them for their efforts.

The remaining gates, by reason of their great width, with no perceptible fall of water, were passed easily and quickly ; and, as the sun was sinking beneath the western horizon, we glided proudly into Syene, beneath a heavy salute from some American boats, and, like veterans of the Nile, who had “done” the Cataracts, and explored Aboo-Simbel *usque ad ima penetralia*, we moored among the palms of Assouan.

CHAP. XVII.

KARNAK.

OUR list of troubles had not been completed by the explosion narrated in the last chapter; for we were on the point of starting downwards from Assouan, when we found we should be obliged to wait till the next day, as five of the crew had deserted and gone away to their native villages a few miles down the river.

On taking the reis before our old friend the Cadi, whom we disturbed at his dinner, deeply engaged with a pilaff of a most exquisite odour,—at least it seemed so to us, who looked forward to dining presently,—and again requesting his assistance, he provided us with an order addressed to the sheikh of a village situate on the river-side about seven miles below Assouan, and which he said would not fail to obtain for us as many men as we wanted: then, drawing us on one side, he whispered by means of his effendi, who spoke French, that the reis was greatly to blame for this desertion, and that he fully expected when we arrived at this village he (the reis) would

make some difficulty about presenting the order. "However," said the Cadi, "if he demurs at all, continue on to Esne, and give this letter to the governor there, who will complete the number of your crew, and at the same time administer the bastinado to the reis."

It must have been a full hour after sunset that we bade adieu to the Cadi, and with our diminished crew commenced pulling leisurely down the river. My friend and I were very tired with our day's exertions; but anxious as we were to retire to our cabins for the night, we were afraid to do so, lest the reis should play us some trick, and pass the village without presenting the order for the additional men. However, on his assuring us that he would do all we wished, we determined to trust him, and, retreating beneath our mosquito curtains, were soon half asleep, dreamily listening to the subdued chat of the rowers, and the measured dip of their oars. At what precise moment I lost all consciousness I am unable to say, but I remember being suddenly awoke by my companion's voice, telling me that the reis had *done* us, for that we were moored hard and fast to the bank, and that he and his remaining men were all asleep in the bows.

To all my readers our reis may not seem to have been guilty of any great crime, but those who have

been Nile travellers must know that in descending the river a calm still night is a thing never to be thrown away.

A few moments sufficed us to hurry on our *continuations* and shooting-jackets, and then, leaving the cabin and shaking the reis, we asked him if he had made any attempt to obtain the fresh men. "No," said he, "to-morrow will do." Remembering the instructions of the Cadi, we told him we should now continue on to Esne, and report him to the governor there, who would most certainly treat him to a taste of the bastinado. When he heard this he became fearfully excited, dared us or any one else to touch him; then, snatching up his bundle, on my friend going in search of his kurbash, he sprang on to the bank and commenced to walk off, accompanied by the rest of the crew, except one man, a Coptic Christian, who had stuck by us from the beginning. Not liking the idea of being left almost alone in such an out-of-the-way place, we each seized one of a brace of loaded pistols which lay on the cabin table, and, as he stood close to us on the bank hesitating, we declared we would fire at him if he did not come back. For an instant, startled at this sudden threat, he seemed half inclined to obey; but the next moment, doubting our intention of going so far, he retreated a step or two,

and my friend taking care to hold his pistol high, fired over his head. Thinking the danger over, the reis began to walk off in real earnest, when, jumping on to the bank and following him, I told him I had still another bullet for him, and that if he passed a certain tree beneath which he was standing I would send it after him. This brought him to a stand-still again, but only for a second, for I suppose, determining to take the risk of being again missed, he turned round and fairly bolted as fast as his legs could carry him. As I had promised to fire, of course I did, but I forgot now at which particular star I aimed. My friend and I then held a consultation as to what we should do ; and seeing that it was useless to attempt continuing on to Esne with only one sailor and the cook, we decided to return to Assouan, from which we could not be many miles distant, and again claim the assistance of the Cadi.

On striking a lucifer and looking at our watches, we discovered that it was between two and three o'clock A. M. So, as the sun would not be rising for another two hours, and in the darkness we hardly knew whether the boat's head was looking up or down the river, we threw ourselves down on our divans to sleep, until we could get a little light to bear upon our position.

With the first streak of daylight the cook awoke us ; and as what little breeze there was, was adverse, we turned him and our only remaining sailor out on to the bank, to track us back to Assouan; whilst we remained on board, to prevent the boat running aground with the long poles. Notwithstanding all our exertions, we stuck in the mud so often, that we determined to change places with them; and the next moment saw the cook and the sailor in charge of the poles, whilst my friend and I, harnessing ourselves into the rope, commenced to tug the boat along with all our might. I remember once volunteering to work the bellows of a great organ for a friend who was amusing himself with playing the " Hallelujah Chorus," and the perspiration breaking out on my forehead at the tremendous exertions I had to make to keep the tell-tale in its place : but I do assure my readers that those exertions were but child's play, compared to the laborious undertaking of tracking a Nile boat of some twenty tons' burthen for seven miles against a strong current and a contrary wind. However, we managed to do it ; and after five long hours of the hardest work I had ever yet had, or trust am ever likely to have again, we moored our boat beneath the palms of Assouan.

Having re-dressed ourselves—for, as we warmed to

our work, we had thrown off first one, then another item of our clothing,—we repaired to the Cadi, whom we were surprised to find already cognisant of our past troubles; in fact, he had just despatched his rawasses in search of the reis and his men. So, as we had not yet breakfasted, we returned to our boat; and when we again made our appearance before the Cadi, about noon, the reis and several of the deserters were waiting to be examined. I need hardly say, without going into the particulars of the examination, that a sufficiently bad case was made out against them to warrant a sentence of bastinado, which was at once inflicted; the operation being performed by four executioners, two of whom held the prisoner with his face to the ground, whilst the other two, in the most dexterous manner, fillipped alternately the soles of his feet. As we were the arbitrators of the duration of the punishment, we did not allow of its being very severe, but clapped our hands as a signal when we thought each one had had enough; and then when they had kissed our hands, and promised not to offend again, we adjourned to our boat, and once more started downwards.

For three days we continued rowing and floating down the river, and, on the morning of the fourth, we made fast to the bank beneath the columns of

Luxor, at Thebes, among a small fleet of English Dahabichs. Calls were exchanged, and invites to dinner were given, which, after our Nubian days of solitude, made us fancy ourselves back in England, engaged in the usual round of mild dissipation.

The Karnak ruins are, without exception, the finest in Egypt: nor was our preconceived notion of their grandeur lessened by a moonlight visit. In silent awe we sauntered about among the huge columns, which gathered up their vast proportions into the night sky, on either side of us, like giants of some unknown world.

In the most perfect silence we leaned against a fallen capital, and tried in vain to raise our thoughts in unison with the magnificence by which we were surrounded.

Half the night we lingered among its moonlit avenues; and as we returned slowly across the plain towards Luxor, on the way to our boat, it seemed as if the whole object of our pilgrimage had been accomplished, and that we might now go quietly home again to England, and, with closed eyes, to prevent the current of our thoughts being disturbed, dream for the rest of our lives of its marvellous beauties.

For three days our boat lay moored at Luxor,

whilst we, with scarce ever a sense of weariness, wandered, hour after hour, in the court-yards and halls of Karnak. Each day that we knew more of it, did we learn the better to appreciate its ruined splendour, and each moment did the thought occur to us—"how hard to leave it all behind!"

When Rameses sat upon the throne of Egypt, there extended all the way from Luxor an avenue of sphinxes, the traces of which are still discernible; and often, as we donkeyed in the early morning sun through the high grass between the two temples, we would try and realise what must have been the effect of a triumphal procession—the king, at the head of his troops, going in person to worship at the shrines of Karnak, to hang votive offerings on its walls, in testimony of his gratitude to the gods for having rendered him victorious over his enemies.

How altered now the appearance of those halls and chambers, which once rang with the busy hum of priests and kings!—those columned groves, once peopled with a moving crowd of worshippers, but now deserted, silent, and in ruins! Save a few travellers in the season, who attract thither vendors of antiquities, laden with coins and ponderous gold rings, small images, which report too truly saith are manufactured in Birmingham, or on the continent,

expressly for the Theban market, and the mummied limbs of old Egyptians, the high places of Thebes are left in solitude to whiten beneath summer suns.

With the exception of the temple at Esne, all the ruins of the Nile Valley are without the pale of modern civilisation. You stroll up from your boat on the river, and enter Karnak, without having to encounter a human Cerberus with a bunch of keys, soliciting your signature in a visitors' book, expectant of sundry shillings. You can wander where you will, and look at what you please, without having to pay for it. You can even dispose your limbs beneath a column, and take your noon-tide siesta, without being thought a Goth—for, however sacrilegious such a proceeding, there would be no one there to observe it.

The pleasure of finding oneself thus alone among the huge propylons and columns of the Egyptian temples, with no eyes to encounter save the vacant granite orbs of hawk-headed deities, is inexpressibly great.

But about even this charming solitude a few travellers' tales are afloat, which tend to detract a little from its sweetness: how that men of Herculean proportions, and of murderous aspect, have been known to appear mysteriously and suddenly at the

traveller's elbow, and to have demanded *bucksheesh* in tones that admitted of no refusal. And this reminds me of an anecdote related to me since my return, by a friend who was upon the Nile the succeeding winter to which these pages have reference. He was a great lover of all manner of antiques ; and whilst at Thebes, spent so much money in purchasing old arms, that his weakness became pretty generally known amongst all the poor Arabs of that neighbourhood.

Wandering about one afternoon, accompanied by his dragoman, he approached the ruins of Karnak ; and leaving his servant on the shady side of a high dead wall, he entered the temple alone, and was soon engaged in sketching one of the principal avenues. Whilst thus occupied, his attention was drawn to a large block of masonry, above which two black heads were watching his movements. Not liking to betray any emotion of fear, he continued sketching ; but presently observing that they had come forth from their hiding-place, and were casting stealthy glances, now on this side, now on that, to see if the coast was clear, he thought it high time to put his drawing materials away, and rejoin his dragoman. He was on the point of rising, when, on looking over his shoulder, he dis-

covered that they had approached so close, and were so evidently intending to address him, that to move steadily away in the opposite direction would be tantamount to a flight; and, after all, they might not mean him harm.

Having a small brace of French pistols loaded with bullet, one in each pocket, he placed his hands upon them ready to draw them out at any moment, and in this position awaited their approach. When they had arrived within a few yards, one of them significantly patted his side, and at the same time stretching out his other hand, uttered a few words in Arabic, equivalent to ten dollars. If my friend had had any doubts before as to their intentions, he was now convinced that they wished to relieve him of his loose cash; so shaking his head, in testimony of his disinclination to comply with their demands, he commenced to beat a retreat in the direction of his dragoman. Before he had advanced a dozen yards, they had overtaken him; and then placing themselves immediately before him, the one who had already spoken again touched his side, and slowly raising the skirt of his outer garment, displayed, to my friend's horror, an immense horse pistol of undoubted English manufacture. War having been thus declared, my friend instantly pro-

duced his life-preservers, and presenting them at both their heads, shouted out to his dragoman. To his great relief the robbers took to their heels as fast as they could; but as they ran towards the spot where he had left his dragoman, he pursued them, and the next instant saw them caught between two fires.

Able now to speak to them through the medium of an interpreter, he found, to his excessive amusement, that their only object had been to find in him a purchaser of the horse pistol, and which they then again produced; assuring him that it was a *veritable antique*, supposed to have been the property of the great Sesostris, and, on that account, worth infinitely more than they were willing to receive for it!

Our last moments at Thebes were spent in Karnak; and, whilst a full moon shed a flood of silver light across its columned avenues, we bade adieu to the most magnificent relic of past Egyptian glory. From sunset till midnight did we linger, yet hesitating to be gone—but loosing at last from the shore, we went floating down the river to Cairo; and, singing as they pulled, our Arab sailors chaunted back on the still night air a last farewell to Thebes.

Again we passed the mosques and minarets of Keneh, Girgeh, and Osioot; and on the fourth morning after leaving Thebes, we made fast to the bank, in order to visit the grottoes of Beni-Hassan.

In a broiling sun we left our boat, and crossing the intervening plain, we climbed the glaring side of the mountain, near to the summit of which are excavated the above-mentioned tombs. From their form it is easy to see they were intended for sepulchral purposes, each one containing niches for the reception of sarcophagi.

The hieroglyphics and paintings, which cover their several walls, are perhaps the most interesting of any on the Nile, from the light that they throw upon the manners and customs of the old Egyptians. These tombs have also the merit of being of an earlier date to those at Thebes, and, in the elegant and chaste style of their architecture, may vie with anything of the kind between Cairo and the second Cataracts.

The principal ones are four in number, and the paintings in the first relate to different trades,—the watering of flax, and its subsequent employment for the manufacture of linen cloth, agricultural, hunting, and wrestling scenes. In some places scribes register their accounts; in others, the bas-

tinado is inflicted unsparingly on delinquent slaves; then, again, women are seen playing on musical instruments, whilst others are kneading paste and making bread. The paintings in the second tomb are devoted almost entirely to games of hunting and wrestling; whilst, occupying the whole side of the left wall, is seen a long procession being ushered into the presence of some great man, his rank being evident from his immense size.

There are many opinions afloat as to the meaning of this procession, Champollion taking them to be Greeks made captive in war; but the majority of men learned in Egyptian paintings suppose them to be Joseph's brethren, being brought before him as he sits on his throne in Pharaoh's palace.

To the south are more grottoes, some of which are much larger than those I have mentioned, though they are devoid of so great interest; and some columns in the form of stalks of water-plants, bound together at the top, and surmounted with the lotus-flower, add not a little to the beauty of one of the most extensive.

Our voyage now draws to a close. After leaving the high white cliffs of Beni-Hassan, and whilst the evening sun was kissing with its golden rays the many domes and tapering minarets of Minieh, we

passed floating down towards Cairo ; and rowing on far into the night, my friend and I sat wrapped in our capotes—for, though soft, midnight air in Egypt at this time of the year is very cold—wrapped in our capotes, we sat on our divans ; and, as we listened for the last time to our Arab crew singing, and thrumming the tarabuka, whilst we slipped swiftly, but silently, down the river, we strove in vain to think that, having been two months on the Nile, we had had enough of it.

Never again do I look forward to spending two months in a more serene and pleasant manner. We certainly had experienced disagreeables—perhaps more than most Nile tourists—dispensing with dragomanic services, trials of strength with our reis, and so forth ; yet, might they not be looked upon as little periods of excitement, without which our river life would, perchance, have been somewhat monotonous ?

It is a common saying in Egypt, that “he who has once tasted the sweet waters of the Nile, will return, sooner or later, to drink of them again.” Whether this saying is likely to come true, in my case, remains, I fear, to some very distant future to decide; but the period that I spent in sailing over those waters will ever remain marked in my memory with white chalk.

Without a care for the morrow, one lives on the Nile, from day to day, luxuriating in such a present as seldom happens to a man twice in his life. Entirely freed from every kind of restraint necessarily imposed upon one by society in England, one literally lives here *au naturel*.

All day, and every day from sunrise to sunset, one is abroad on the earth, passing away the time with self and nature, walking, shooting, or visiting temples; and living ever in such an exquisite climate, beneath a cloudless sky, both by day and night, one seems to get at last quite intimate with all the heavenly bodies, but more especially the moon, and is able to calculate on her appearance to a minute; so that we used often to say to each other, "I hope we shall get to such a place by eight o'clock next Tuesday evening, for we shall then have finished dinner; and as the moon rises a quarter before, the ruins will be seen to advantage."

For the last time we breakfasted in the cool morning air; and looking on ahead, we found, to our sorrow, that we had floated once more within sight of the citadel of "El Masr," or Cairo. For the last time we puffed our chibouques in silence beneath the awning, and watched the women, bearing their large stone jars on their heads, come down to

the water-side. On the summit of the bank they stood erect and stately, profile-drawn against the sky ; then, descending one by one to the water's edge, they filled their jars ; and, finally, receding in long file, they disappeared among the palms. During the heated silence of noon, we watched the pigeons over the brown mud villages, fluttering and hanging by hundreds to the square towers erected by man for their special convenience. For the last time we were witnesses to sunset glories ; and, with heavy hearts, we brought our Nile days to a close, by mooring to the bank at Boulak.

For some days my friend and I were fully occupied in paying off our crew, and in selling, at an enormous sacrifice in the bazaars, those things which we thought were not likely to be of any further use to us ; and then, as I purposed residing for a month in Cairo, before crossing the desert to Syria, I again took up my abode beneath the hospitable roof of the Prussian Consul, and bade farewell to my companion of the last two months, who was starting immediately, with some brother officers, for Jerusalem.

CHAP. XVIII.

PYRAMIDS.

FOR the first time I mounted a camel — and an awkward and most undignified operation I found it. My dromedary, an animal which bears the same relation to a camel as a saddle horse does in England to a brewer's dray horse, was brought to the door whilst I sat upstairs at breakfast; and, on looking out of the window into the court-yard below, my heart sank within me at the sight of the great beast, evidently an unruly one, his long neck elevating his ugly head almost on a level with the first floor. My first feelings prompted me to ask rather to be placed on the most vicious horse in Cairo; but, screwing up all my courage, I dismissed the thought, and, descending before my resolutions had time to waver, I announced — not my *wish*, but my *determination* to mount.

The half-clothed, swarthy Bedouin, who had care of the animal, now made a sign, at the same time pulling his head down towards the ground by means of the halter. Within the beast instantly com-

menced a fearful contest, which gradually rolling up his long neck, burst out of his mouth in one loud and continued roar. With glaring eyes, and wide extended jaws, he seemed to say, "I'll see you all in Hades first!" But, alas for me! his wish to disobey was in vain; to kneel down he was obliged, never ceasing to growl and grumble whilst my saddle was being arranged. When all was ready, two men placed their feet on his neck, to prevent his rising too suddenly, and I jumped up on his hump—and then came the awful moment. Roaring fearfully, the animal raised his hinder quarters, and I was jerked forwards towards his head; then, before I knew where I was, up came the fore legs, and I was pitched as far backwards, and forced to clutch frantically at his tail to prevent my slipping over it: one more general convulsion, in all parts at once, righted me, "*et me voila perché*," high above surrounding turbans, "monarch of all I surveyed"—or almost; for though I had full command of an adjacent harem, I felt that I was an intruder, so refrained from peeping too minutely.

In my elevated position, I now stalked magnificently across the Erbekuyah gardens to Shepherd's, where joining, according to agreement, some other friends who were satisfied with donkeys, we all rode

out of the city into the desert; and following the Suez road for a distance of seven miles, arrived, as we had anticipated, at the so-called "petrified forest"—a large extent of ground, in all parts more or less thickly strewn with what seemed to be dried logs and trunks of fallen trees. So close was the resemblance that these logs bore to worm-eaten wood that seeing, in this case, was not believing, and we found it absolutely necessary to touch, before we could persuade ourselves of the reality. After loading our attendants with specimens, we returned to Cairo, by way of the Tombs of the Caliphs—a most charming assemblage of swelling domes and minarets, lying outside the city walls in the desert, and whose intrinsic beauty was not a little enhanced by the rich flood of gold, and fast purpling evening sun-light in which they were at that moment bathed.

We entered the city beneath a gateway, situate not far from the El-Azhar mosque—a fact which I have occasion to remember, at the cost, if not of my life, at the least, of a most serious accident; for, to gain the Frank quarter, we had to pass through a succession of very narrow streets, in nearly every one of which occurred a low arched gateway. It is well known that some of these gateways are so low, that not even a heavily laden camel is able to pass under

them, much less when a man is sitting in an erect posture on his hump. A native, being aware of this difficulty, on approaching one which he sees will not admit of his retaining his seat, slips off on to the ground, and remounts on the other side. I had passed beneath one or two in perfect safety, without being obliged to do more than just bend my head forward; and was in the act of conversing with one of my companions behind, and therefore in a happy state of ignorance as to what was immediately before me, when the shouting and running together of the people in the street on either side made me turn my head quickly, but only just in time to feel my breath thrown back on to my face against the keystone of a gateway, beneath which my camel, with too much way upon him to be stopped immediately, had already commenced to pass. With a sort of feeling that it was all over with me, I threw myself as far back as I could, and was carried through in an almost breathless state, my shirt studs actually scraping along against the stone-work. On emerging again into the open street, I could hardly realise my escape, for if there had been a single projecting stone to stop my progress, my camel would have struggled to get free, and my chest must have been crushed in.

As the time would soon arrive for me almost to take up my abode on a camel's hump across the Great Desert, I took every opportunity of breaking myself into a motion which I found to be far from pleasant; and a few days after my visit to the petrified forest, I again ordered one of these animals, and in company with some other gentlemen whom I had met on the Nile, rode out to Heliopolis. In this direction the corn and lentil fields extend further than in any other about Cairo; and all the way, a distance of six or seven miles, we passed through a fertile country, watching the fellahs at their agricultural labours, and not a little amused at sometimes remarking a very tall camel and a very small donkey yoked together in double harness, dragging a plough through the rich brown soil.

The ride occupied us about two hours, and, soon after passing the small village of Mataréch, we arrived at Heliopolis — its site marked by a single obelisk in a very perfect state. The traces of this Temple of the Sun, and of the surrounding town, are very extensive, and history speaks of it as being of great celebrity.

In times past, when the rich Athenian wandered forth from the coasts of Greece, and was carried in his trireme to the land of Egypt, he used to ascend

the Nile to Cairo, and passing thence to Heliopolis, he would be shown the residences of Plato and Eudoxus — these philosophers having, it is said, remained thirteen years under the tuition of the priests of the Temple of the Sun.

There are other associations of interest to the Christian tourist connected with this neighbourhood: for at Mataréeh is a fountain over which hangs an aged sycamore. It was originally salt; and the story runs that, when the Virgin Mary with the infant Saviour fled, under the protection of Joseph, from the cruelty of Herod into Egypt, they rested beneath this sycamore, and, being athirst, the waters of the fountain were made sweet in order that they might drink; and ever since has the tree lived and flourished, casting a cool shade over the spring at which the Holy Family refreshed themselves, after their journeyings through the desert.

But all this time I have omitted saying anything about the great Pyramids. Strange as the confession may seem, though I had been already three months in the land of Egypt, I had only admired them from a distance: but now a good opportunity offered. The same gentlemen whom I had accompanied to Heliopolis proposed that we should make a joint expedition thither; so procuring a couple

of tents, and engaging the services of a dragoman, by name Hassan, we set out one morning, and riding down to Old Cairo, crossed over, donkeys and all, to the opposite village of Ghizeh.

A great plain, seven miles in breadth, has to be crossed after leaving Ghizeh, before the Pyramids are reached. But, when we arrived there and saw the great Pyramids, nothing short of the fact of the time that it took us to reach them—*viz.* two hours' donkey-riding — could have made us believe that they were more than a mile off. I fancy this will have struck in a more or less degree every one who has travelled from Cairo to the Pyramids. I suppose the exceeding clearness of the atmosphere, combined with the immense size of the object, seen across a plain, with nothing to interrupt the view, will easily account for it: but the most curious thing is, that they seem equally large from a distance of *seven* miles as they do from *one*.

When we arrived within two or three hundred yards of the base of the largest of the three, commonly called the Great Pyramid, we were met by about a dozen Arabs, who are resident in a village hard by, and who act as guides. Accustomed to see English tourists without number, they have managed to pick up an immense amount of slang in

the English vernacular. It certainly sounds oddly to be greeted by a semi-civilised inhabitant of the Desert with the words "How d'ye get along, old fellow?" "Does your mother know you're out?" and then to hear him violating the sacred atmosphere with a snatch from "Villikens and his Dinah."

A little more than a stone's throw from the Great Pyramid, the colossal but mutilated head of the Sphinx rises from the sand. Many years ago, by the joint labours of Mr. Salt and Signor Caviglia, the sand was cleared away, and its huge proportions, now again buried, were discovered. The body is that of a lion in a recumbent posture, and the whole is cut out of the solid rock, with the exception of the fore legs, which are of hewn stone. No pedestal was found, but a paved *dromos* in front of it, on which the paws reposed. Between the two paws was an altar, upon which sacrifices were performed; and the area which extended from the paws, between the fore legs, as far as the breast, was sufficiently large for their sacred processions to take place. All that is now to be seen is the head, a female one, above the sand. The features are almost entirely obliterated, but many travellers fancy that there is still expression enough left to prove it to have been of African cast.

At three o'clock in the afternoon we commenced the ascent of the Great Pyramid—certainly a laborious undertaking, but far less so than I had anticipated, from different accounts which I had read of it. Declining all assistance from the numerous guides, who were most eager to do something for us, we made our way to the summit in eight minutes, as nearly as I can recollect. I mention this, as I then had a book in my possession by an American, who had consumed at least twenty minutes of hard work in reaching the summit, and was so knocked up when he got there, that he doubted his ability of ever getting down again.

If the traveller's object in ascending the Great Pyramid is to obtain a fine view, he may as well save himself all trouble by remaining below, for he will see quite as much thence.

Once more arrived at its base, we gazed up in unspeakable admiration at the mass of masonry above us, stretching high up into the blue sky, and far away on either side; in fact, from this point decidedly the most exalted notion is formed of its stupendous size.

The autograph mania rages violently throughout the whole land of Egypt, but in no place so fiercely as at the Pyramids. From the base to the summit,

is the Great Pyramid of Cheops become one vast record of the visits of many thousands of tourists. Names of all sizes and lengths are cut upon every stone, from "Joc Buggins" of Camberwell, to that of the great "Winterstein"—if we may judge of the latter's greatness by the size of the letters which compose his name. I suppose when we arrived at the summit the Arabs must have said among themselves, "Here's a lot more of them;" for forthwith producing chisels and other instruments, and without waiting to ask our permission, they said, "This very good place, Sir—very big letters: what's your name?" They seemed perfectly amazed when we declined adding our names to the myriads already engraved there; but whether we raised ourselves in their estimation or not, I am in doubt.

The perpendicular height of the Cheops or Great Pyramid is 450 feet, as measured by Colonel Howard Vyse; and Sir Gardner Wilkinson has calculated that its base covers nearly the same area as Lincoln's Inn Fields, that is to say, about 550,000 square feet. According to Herodotus 100,000 men were employed in the construction of this Pyramid, and in cutting and transporting stones from the quarries. These men were relieved every three

months by the same number; and the time employed in building the two largest was 106 years.

The second Pyramid is only a little inferior in size, but is more difficult of ascent, on account of the summit being still coated with the stucco, which formerly entirely covered it.

After walking round all three, and examining the tombs in the immediate vicinity, we returned to the first, and with torches commenced exploring its interior. The entrance lies at a height of some few steps from the base. We first travelled along a descending shaft of what appeared to be smooth marble. This shaft, as nearly as I can remember, was five feet in height by four in breadth, and, as there are no steps, we found it very difficult to avoid constantly slipping. Its length is about eighty feet; and, arrived at its extreme limit, we turned to the right, and, once more able to stand upright, we ascended a small flight of rough steps, and, then again obliged to stoop, we ascended another shaft of about the same length and dimensions as the first. From the summit of this there extended a long gallery, which ushered us through a double gateway into the principal chamber of the Pyramid, called the King's Chamber.

This chamber is 34 feet by 17, and 19 in height:

the roof is flat, formed of single blocks of red granite, resting on the side walls, which are built of the same material. By the light of our torches we approached the upper end, where was an empty sarcophagus of the same kind of red granite, 3 feet and 1 inch in height, 7 feet four inches long, by 3 feet broad. And here it was that the body of the great king, by whom the Pyramid had been completed, was once laid, embalmed and spiced, and otherwise rendered capable of lasting through many generations. One of the guides, for our amusement, commenced beating with a stone the granite sides of the empty sarcophagus, and at last succeeded in extracting a bell-like sound, at which he seemed much amused, and proposed that we should instantly reward his efforts with a *bucksheesh*. He bore a refusal with tolerable equanimity; for, considering our having declined to immortalise ourselves by cutting our names on the summit, I have no doubt that he put two and two together, and found the total coincide with our not wishing to see the sarcophagus damaged for the sake of enjoying a little *music*, as he chose to call it.

There is yet another chamber in this Pyramid, called the Queen's Chamber. It is situated below the principal or King's Chamber, and is reached by

means of a gallery leading directly to the heart of the Pyramid, from the lower extremity of the first descending shaft. It is not so large as the one I have described; and its walls have been much defaced on account of the Arabs having removed many of the stones, in hopes of finding treasure. It lies immediately under the apex of the Pyramid, at a depth of 408 feet below the original summit, and 72 feet above the level ground.

After consuming an hour in exploring the interior, we retraced our steps to the mouth, not a little glad to emerge from the atmosphere of death, and the abode of bats without number.

It was now dark. Our tents had been pitched within a stone's throw of the huge Sphinx; and, as we approached our small encampment, and saw the fires burning, casting a red glow on the brightly colored costumes of the servants, as they passed and repassed before the flames, whilst preparing our evening meal, we became pleasantly excited at the thought of passing the night beneath canvass instead of tiles.

Dinner being discussed, we sat in the tent door; and, pleased at fancying ourselves to be Bedouins of the Desert, we compared our present mode of life with our usual one in England.

One by one our different Arab attendants stretched themselves on the sand to sleep, the fires burnt low, and at length we bade each other "Good-night," and, wrapping our rugs around us, we retired to our several carpets — we had no idea of *beds* in the desert — and laid ourselves down to sleep.

But we soon found that all such happiness was out of the question. The fleas were numerous and very lively ; the mosquitoes were savage, and quite famished ; so, after enduring a couple of hours' agony, I rushed out into the moonlight to cool myself, and strolling within the shadow cast upon the sand by the Sphinx, I once more wrapped my plaid about me, and passed the remainder of the night in making cigarettes, and contemplating the mutilated features of the Colossus.

With the first streak of daylight we were astir ; and, after discussing some coffee and macaroni, we mounted our donkeys, and rode off in the direction of Sakkara, leaving Hassan, the dragoman, to strike the tents and follow.

A dreary and uninteresting ride of five hours, across the desert, brought us at length to the extensive excavations of Sakkara. A French gentleman in the pay of his government has been domiciled here for the last two years, and, through his exertions,

many of the large sand-hills, here very plentiful, have been opened, and much interesting matter brought to light. So deeply is he absorbed in his work, that the fact of living from month to month all alone in the desert does not seem to suggest itself to his mind as being at all a disagreeable one. His sole companions are two monkeys—the most mischievous of their kind—who sit at his breakfast table, and from day to day assist him in overcoming his after-dinner bottle of Bordeaux. Unlike most children at dessert, they seem not the least abashed by the presence of visitors; and I do not think my Nile companion will ever quite forgive one of them for the sudden disappearance of a gold pencil case, which he fancies was quietly disposed of in his pouch.

Through the kindness of the Frenchman, we were provided with guides and candles; and, at a distance of five minutes' walk from his house, we came to the entrance of the principal excavations. Descending a short incline, we passed through a door, and, leaving daylight behind us, and holding our candles over our heads, we threaded several galleries, and, after turning an equal number of corners, came to one very long gallery, down the whole length of which, on either side, were deep recesses, each recess

containing a sarcophagus of highly polished porphyry. At the further end, gazing down this gallery, was the figure of a lion couchant. These tombs are dedicated to the Sacred Cow, and each of the sarcophagi formerly contained one of these animals.

In a smaller tomb, not far from these excavations, are many very beautiful paintings, all relating to the Sacred Cow, whose image is depicted under various forms. At Sakkara are more pyramids, though very inferior in size to the ones at Ghizeh.

After thanking the Frenchman for his politeness, we again mounted our donkeys, and rode on in the direction of the river towards Mitrahenny, at which place we arrived in two hours. There is very little to see here, the principal object being a huge Osiride column, which lies on its face, poor thing, in a ditch! The villagers, hearing that we were English, informed us that it belonged to our government, and wondered that our queen, if she was as rich and powerful as report had led them to believe, had not given orders for its removal to England. As we could give them no adequate reason, we left the poor villagers still to wonder, and to put the same question to succeeding travellers, as to why the beautiful Osiride column should lie on its face in the ditch, instead of being carried to England.

Mitrahenny has been fixed upon as the site of ancient Memphis, which in size and beauty was once a fit rival for the great Thebes. Nought now remains to tell of all the magnificence and wealth that formerly existed in these desert spots, save numerous mounds, which, encircled by palms, look like the graves of a bygone nation.

Spreading our tablecloth beneath a clump of these trees, we rested our animals, whilst we lunched and passed away an hour in chatting with the villagers, who came crowding round us to see what was to be got, and who took the opportunity, whenever there was a silence, of chaunting the *Bucksheesh Anthem*.

Two hours' riding from Mitrahenny brought us to the river, which we again crossed, as on the preceding day, donkeys and all, in boats to the opposite side.

The trouble we had to embark our steeds was certainly great; but it was nothing to the business of disembarking them: for the water being too shallow to permit of our sailing close to the opposite bank, we were forced to stop short of it by about a hundred yards. Supported on the sturdy shoulders of the Arabs, it was not long before we were standing on *terra firma*; but, on looking back, we perceived

that no amount of kicks and yells would induce our long-eared animals to leave the boats. Even when the men had contrived to get the fore legs of one of them into the water, the creature would persist on leaving his hind legs in the boat, perfectly careless of the ridiculous appearance that this position gave him.

After a great deal of laughing on our part, and a great deal of swearing on that of the Arabs, all the donkeys were at length hustled into the water, and brought safely to land; and then again mounting we rode across the desert by way of Toorah to Cairo.

Passing the Tombs of the Memlooks on our left, we entered the city beneath the walls of the lofty citadel, and threaded our way along the narrow and crowded streets, the donkey-boys running on before, shouting, "O'ah shemáluk ! O'ah heménuk, wishák, O'ah reglák!" which are intended as warnings to the passengers, and, translated, are as follows, — "O there, out of the way to the right ! O there, out of the way to the left ! O take care of your face ; take care of your feet !" And woe betide the old man or woman that fails to pay attention to these shouts ; for, as the rider never thinks of slackening his pace, short work is made of whoever may stand in his way.

Nor does the person so rudely jostled ever seem annoyed ; and when the impetuous little donkey, on which I have been riding, has gone with his head "full tilt" against the back of some white-bearded sheikh, I have often been amused at the perfect indifference with which the concussion has been received.

CHAP. XIX.

THE DESERT.

RATHER more than two months ago, standing on the steps of Shepherd's Hotel, I had entered into a partnership with an officer in Her Majesty's Service, the result of which was a voyage on the Nile. This partnership having been dissolved some time since, by reason of one of the "parties" having left Cairo for Jerusalem, I was now again anxious to meet with another "party" with whom I could swear eternal friendship, at any rate, so long as we might be travelling together, having been previously informed that there was a "party" in the hotel who was making up a caravan for Jerusalem. I was standing exactly in the same spot in front of Shepherd's, chatting with one of my Cairene acquaintances as to what arrangements were necessary for crossing the Desert, the best time for starting, &c., when a third "party" joined us; and from a remark which he made, I was induced to ask if he was the "party" I had heard speak of as

about to start for Jerusalem. After replying in the affirmative, he asked whether I was the "other party" that *he* had heard speak of as endeavouring to make up a caravan. Coming to the conclusion that we were both "*the parties*" that each had heard speak of, we introduced ourselves to each other, and proposed that we should join forces, and face the perils of desert and Syrian travelling together.

So far all being well, we went to church (it being Sunday), and then to smoke a pipe and sip some sherbet with the private Secretary of our Consul General, who had told me he was going to part with a servant likely to make us a good dragoman.

Remembering my lot on the Nile, with regard to dragomen, I determined to be more circumspect this time; so that the next two or three days were spent by me and my new friend almost entirely in reading testimonials of all sorts. Our choice was at length made in favour of a man of great height and size, by name Mohammad Mazawood, formerly a kawass in the service of Mr. Murray, the Consul General, of great proficiency in the French, Italian, and Turkish languages, though his knowledge of English was exceedingly limited. As a boy he had been a pipe-cleaner, or boot-cleaner,

or something of the sort, to Champollion, who had taken some pains in teaching him French.

Leaving everything in the hands of Mohammad, we told him we should like to leave Cairo that day week, that he was to make all the necessary arrangements respecting the camels and provisions, and so relieve us of all trouble.

Rides to Shoobra and the citadel, hours spent in the bazaars, chatting and smoking with the vendors of silks and perfumes, occupied the remainder of my Cairene days.

The evening before leaving the city, I attended, according to invitation, a native wedding. The ceremony was observed in the house of the bride's father, a rich merchant, dwelling in the Coptic quarter. It was about 8 o'clock when, preceded by an Arab bearing a fanoose, I arrived at the door of the house. Brilliantly illuminated within, there streamed out through the large gateway on to the dark and narrow street a flood of light: sounds of music and dancing, mingling with the chink of castanets, were stirring with envy the hearts of the crowd outside, to whom admittance was denied.

Bidding my lantern-bearer await my return, I entered, and was conducted through several apartments into the large court-yard of the house, which

had been roofed in for the occasion. On a low divan running all round, reclined the numerous guests. The atmosphere was so laden with clouds of Latakia, which kept rising in thick volumes from their multitudinous pipe-bowls, that it was some seconds before I could distinguish a picturesque group of Ghawazee — or rather dancing boys, for, as I said before, there are no Ghawazee now in Cairo — who were delighting with their graceful movements these followers of Mahomet. High above our heads, at the hareem windows, glittered white hands, and bright eyes sparkled 'mid the waving to and fro of veils and kerchiefs; whilst ever and anon burst forth the loud and tremulous *ziraleet** of the women.

In one of the rooms opening on to the court sat the master of the house, entertaining* a few select friends. My introduction over, I was motioned to take my seat on the divan to his left, and, being accommodated with a pipe and the usual accompaniment, a small silver fingan of coffee, I refrained from outraging the sanctity of the “back parlour,” by

* The *ziraleet* is the cry of joy made by the women on all such occasions. It is produced by them in the throat; though I found that the only way in which I could arrive at the same effect, was by pitching my voice into a falsetto, and slapping the mouth when open, as children are in the habit of doing.

uttering a syllable during the whole time that I sat there.

Had this been an English, instead of an Egyptian wedding, I should have most deservedly been stamped in mine host's mind as about one of the "slowest" young men that he had ever had the pleasure of entertaining: as it was, I believe I acted in the most correct manner by preserving the strictest silence; for I had already learned that the best method of obtaining the heart of a Turk, was by, if possible, surpassing him in sombreness and gravity.

After sitting here for about an hour, I made my bow to the host, and strolled out again into the court-yard; and, questioning one of the numerous dragomen who were loitering about, I inquired if anything in the shape of amusement was going to happen. "If you will wait," said one of them, "till about two hours before sunrise, you will see the bride taken away to the house of the bridegroom" On looking at my watch, and seeing that it was only a little after nine, I determined to forego the pleasure of beholding the happy pair; so bidding adieu to the host, I went out to look for my lantern bearer, in order to be escorted back to my quarters. My vexation at not finding him, may be the better conceived, when I inform my readers of one of the

regulations of almost all Oriental cities, *viz.* that “Whosoever is caught by the police, three hours after sunset, walking about without a lantern or light of some kind, is immediately lodged for the night in the nearest guard-house, nor is any excuse listened to until the next morning.” I suppose, taking it for granted that I should not leave the festive scene till a little before sunrise, he had gone off home, and left me to find my own way by Phœbus’ light instead of *his* fanoose. However, notwithstanding all Mohammad Ali’s wise regulations, I contrived to reach home without being either incarcerated, or knocked on the head and robbed.

At an early hour the next morning, Mohammad came to report that the caravan was made up, and that he only now awaited our orders to start immediately. As all our own arrangements had been settled some days back, I bade farewell to Mr. Müller, whose kindness to me whilst in Cairo I shall ever remember with gratitude, and with my new friend I set forth on my desert journey.

All our camp effects, provisions, water, &c., had been distributed equally upon the backs of eight camels; upon one of which Mohammad had perched his goodly proportions. My friend and I had been deluding ourselves with the notion that *we* were to

be mounted upon the humps of two fleet dromedaries, by the help of which we had pictured ourselves as not so much forming a *part* of the caravan as in being in *attendance* upon it, at times scouring on ahead on the look out for Bedouins, or in search of the curious ; and I may say that our mortification was excessive, when, on looking out of the windows of Shepherd's dining-room, we saw that our portmanteaus, bedding, &c. had been packed upon the backs — not of two dromedaries, but — of two camels of the very largest and ugliest of their kind. In anger we turned to Mchammad, inquiring why something more picturesque had not been obtained for our use. " Ah Monsieur," said he, " I am very sorry, but all the dromedaries have been engaged for the Petra route, and these are the best I could get for you."

Swallowing our vexation, we went through the painful ordeal of mounting, and then, bidding adieu to Cairo, we passed through the Gate of Victory, and sallied forth upon the desert ocean *en route* for Palestine.

The body of our caravan, with the exception of the camel which Mohammad rode, had left the city some hours before us, with orders to pitch the tents, and get everything in readiness for our reception.

It was a little after noon, when, leaving the mosques and minarets of Cairo behind us, we "pushed off" into the desert, and getting clear of the numerous cemeteries belonging to the city; we plodded on, swinging backwards and forwards with every step of our camels, for the space of five hours.

Daylight was fast forsaking us, when Mohammad, pointing to some distant palms, drew our attention to the tents and the camp fires just discernible in the gathering darkness. "But surely," said we, "all those tents, and camels wandering about near them, do not belong to us?" — Nor did they: on arrival we found that another caravan of English travellers, having left the same day, had pitched their tents in the same spot, known by the name of "El Ilanka." To my great joy they proved to be friends who had landed in Alexandria some months back, on the same day with me, and whom I had met several times on the Nile. So we were not to be quite alone in our desert voyage, which was exceedingly pleasant. The party consisted of a clergyman travelling with his wife and another lady.

The excitement of our first day in the Desert tended somewhat to diminish our appetites; but somehow we managed to make away with a large portion of the cook's preparation of macaroni and

Irish stew — a dish at which the Arabs are rather “great.”

The camels, after their day’s work, were all on their haunches, ranged in a circle around the tents, each one busily engaged in munching a great “mound” of green food, and which, as the dragoman explained, was not more than was good for them, since it was all they would have for the next week or ten days.

Forming groups about two or three large fires, our camel-men and servants sang and chattered over their suppers; capacious kettles, suspended among the flames, hissed; tea cups rattled — in fact, everything conspired to render our first encampment the most delightful pic-nic that we had ever been engaged in. The greatest source of pleasure was to know that it was all real, that it was no “taking tea in the arbour,” with the dining-room windows only a dozen yards off; but this was to be our actual mode of life for the next two months.

By ten o’clock all was quiet. The camel-men had wrapped themselves in their capotes, and had stretched themselves on the sand to sleep; the fires were almost out; and a full moon was shedding its milky radiance over our desert homes. We also retired to our couches — but not to sleep! The

first night in the Desert was decidedly against sweet dreams and calm repose ; for our Arab guards, giving a noisy watchword every five minutes, and singing in the intervals, completely bothered poor Morpheus, who tried, I am sure, to do the best he could for us — but all in vain.

The eastern horizon was glowing with the near approach of sunrise, when the dragoman, entering our tent, woke us, and advised us to be stirring, if we wished to get the greater part of our day's work over before the heat of the day commenced. Whilst we dressed, the breakfast, consisting of an omelette, macaroni, and coffee, was prepared outside the tent. This we presently discussed, surrounded with all the débris and confusion of half-a-dozen tents being struck and packed, with all the camp *et ceteras*, upon the backs of twenty camels, who, with their long necks, were wandering about in disagreeable proximity to our breakfast table, occasionally dipping their noses into our dishes.

In shorter time than I could have supposed it possible, everything was transferred from the ground to their humps ; and, mounting our own ungainly steeds, we fell into the rear of the caravan, which was soon plodding over the desert expanse. A few burnt embers, and the sand a little turned

with the tent pegs, were the only signs which remained to tell of the merry evening, the dinner, and the breakfast which we had enjoyed at El Hanka. Nor would these traces exist there long; for the breeze, which was already creeping over the Desert with the rising sun, would in a few hours entirely obliterate them: and had we returned at sunset with the intention of pitching our tents in the spot we "seemed to know so well," no amount of searching or reconnoitring would have enabled us to be at all sure whether or no we were within a mile of our *quondam* restingplace.

However well your saddle may be arranged, the first two or three days spent on a camel's back cannot fail to be attended with a great deal of bodily suffering. With these pleasant anticipations, I mounted my camel; but so happy and comfortable was I for the first hour, ensconced between my two portmanteaus, to prevent my rolling over the side—the hard back of the animal softened by the intervention of rugs and coats without number, a white cotton umbrella fastened at my back to shield me from the sun's intense heat—so happy and comfortable did I feel, that I began to hope that the agonies of camel-riding were either immensely exaggerated, or else that they did not exist at all. At first I

swayed to and fro with every step, and positively liked it; by degrees my back began to ache, so I tried to sit erect without moving. This proved a relief for a few minutes; but, finding the effort too great to continue long in this position, I attempted to recline with my head resting on my hand. This last manœuvre I found would not do at any price; for the motion of the camel's hind legs was so utterly at variance with the motion of his fore legs, that I was jerked upwards, and forwards and sideways, and finally ended in nearly rolling off altogether.

What was I to do? In distress both of mind and body, I turned to Mohammad. His advice was that I should allow myself, as at first, to be swung backwards and forwards, and that I should very soon (*i. e.* in a day or two) accommodate myself to what I now considered anything but a comfortable motion.

Without going into the details of all that I suffered for the next two or three days, how that on several occasions I slid from the camel's back to the ground, in despair of ever accustoming my half-dislocated joints to the ceaseless jerking and swaying to and fro, and how that I often determined to trudge on foot over the hot desert sand all the way to Jerusalem, rather than endure it longer—without devoting a page in description of all these miseries,

I shall merely say, that the day did at last arrive when I descended from my camel, after many hours' riding, in as happy and comfortable a state of mind and body as if I had been lolling in the easiest of arm chairs.

We left El Hanka an hour before sunrise, and, journeying in a north-easterly direction for nine hours, we pitched our tents, a little before sunset, close to the town of Belbeys. We had not yet lost sight of "land," so to speak, but all day we had skirted the edge of the Desert—cultivation being still visible on the horizon to our left. Towards sunset, making a "tack in shore," we approached the aforesaid town of Belbeys, and pitched our tents bencath its walls.

After dining *chez nous*, and taking coffee *chez nos amis*, we retired for the night, the dragoman having first blazed away with his "carabine," to warn any wandering Bedouins of the reception they were likely to meet with.

The next morning, as usual, we were up before the sun, and, whilst we breakfasted outside the tents, the camels were packed and everything prepared for the day's march. Our friends being ready before we were, went slowly on, leaving us to follow; but just as we were on the point of starting, my com-

panion found, to his dismay, that his watch and chain were missing. Of course Mohammad was called ; but on his expressing entire ignorance of their whereabouts, we were forced to let our friends gradually increase their distance from us, whilst we examined our different camel-men and servants. As no one knew anything of the missing articles, we now gave orders to unpack the camels, and a regular search to be made, and thus an hour passed away ; but still the watch and chain were not forthcoming.

It seems that my companion, not having finished his toilet when I shouted out to him that the macaroni was getting cold, laid his watch on the bed, and came out to breakfast, intending to pack his portmanteau afterwards : meanwhile, to expedite matters, the tent had been removed, and the bed with his open portmanteau had been left as they were on the sand, until we had finished our breakfast.

As my friend could swear to having laid his watch on the bed, it was very evident that some one of the camel-men had taken possession of it whilst we were deep in the macaroni dish : yet no one had *seen* it, much less *taken* it.

Following Mohammad's advice, we again pitched the tents, and proceeded to have all the men examined before the Cadi of Belbeys. As might have

been expected, two or three hours were wasted, and several dollars were expended, without our getting any nearer to the production of the watch. The only point we could arrive at was, that a man, in the garb of a Bedouin of a most disreputable appearance, had been seen hovering about the tents whilst they were being struck, his excuse being that he wished to be allowed to travel under our escort as far as El Arish.

After wasting another hour in search of this disreputable individual, the Cadi wrote a letter to the Governor of El Arish, to the effect that he should take into custody any man arriving in that town answering to his description. This letter he gave into our keeping, to deliver on arrival at El Arish : and so we left Belbeys, taking with us the good Cadi's earnest hopes that the watch and chain would eventually "turn up."

By the time we reached our tents, the "kampseen," or sirocco of the Desert, which had been threatening ever since we left Cairo, had commenced; so, following Mohammad's advice, we got us into our canvass houses, and, instead of proceeding on our journey, we closed up every little opening we could find, and, lying down an our beds, we went fast asleep.

This wind is termed the "kampseen," on account

of the period during which it lasts, *viz.* fifty days. It never blows for more than three or five days at a time, though the whole time, from the day on which it commences until the expiration of the fifty days is called “the time of the kampseen.” Fortunately for us, we had a very mild specimen of it, being nearly choked with heat instead of sand. I must confess that I was a little disappointed in it: for when Mohammad, pointing in the direction whence it was approaching us, said, “*Voila messieurs ! le kampseen il vient,*” I fully expected it would be a case of throwing ourselves on our faces to the ground, whilst the poor camels buried their noses in the sand to avoid suffocation. Instead of that, we merely retired to our tents and went to sleep; and when we woke up towards sunset, the weather was so much clearer that we were enabled to renew our march.

CHAP. XX.

ENCOUNTER WITH BEDOUINS.

HAVING been warned at Belbeys that some parties of armed Bedouins were in the neighbourhood, who would certainly, as Mohammad made out—as what dragoman will not?—attack or annoy us in one way or another, if they fell in with us, we determined to make a night march of it, as much for the purpose of eluding them, as of coming up with our friends, who by this time must have been twenty miles in advance.

The hot wind of the Kampseen had died away at sunset, leaving the night air deliciously cool; whilst an unclouded moon lighted up our course over the desert sand brilliantly white with its rays.

During seven hours of the most perfect silence, our little caravan went slowly on its way to Palestine; and as, wrapped in my plaid, I nodded and dozed on the back of my camel, it seemed to me, in my dreamy state of half-consciousness, that I was being rocked to and fro upon the bosom of the wide Pacific, on a calm night, in an open boat. A little after midnight

I was awoke by my boat drifting on to a sand bank ; in other words, our caravan had halted, and my camel kneeling down whilst I was dreaming of the Pacific, I had been deposited most unceremoniously over his head on to the ground.

The next morning before the sun was up we were again on the march, constantly straining our eyes over the vast expanse of desert, in the hopes of discerning the advance body of our caravan. Towards noon some specks in motion were seen on the horizon before us, which at first were pronounced to be our friends ; but as the distance between us decreased, and we found they were approaching us instead of going our way, very little doubt was left in our minds that they were perhaps the very Bedouins whom we had been trying to avoid.

In the course of another half hour, we were enabled to make out a party of nine Bedouins, all fully armed and mounted on small fleet dromedaries. When we came within hail, we halted, and our sheikh, the owner of the camels which composed our caravan, rode forward to speak with them.

For a moment or two we felt decidedly anxious, as we were quite unable to cope with such formidable looking opponents ; and Mohammad unslung his carbine, whilst we fitted caps to the nipples of our

guns. In another minute, however, all our fears proved groundless; for after demanding to see our passports, they allowed us to proceed, and they were soon the mere specks on the horizon behind us as, an hour or so previous, they had been before us. During the rest of the day we travelled in silence over the hot sands, and at sunset encamped close to the tomb of an Arab saint, near to which was a well, shaded by a solitary sycamore.

Breakfast over the next morning, we struck our tents and continued our march, not forgetting to leave behind us a few piastres, a tribute of respect to the memory of the old sheikh who here lies asleep in his desert tomb. It is an Eastern custom always to leave a small offering at these tombs, an act of charity to the many poor pilgrims who pass them on their way from the shrines of Mecca to those of Jerusalem and Bagdad.

At noon we arrived at the small Bedouin village of Salla-héa, where for an hour we rested our camels, and spread our carpets on the ground to lunch. On questioning the people who came out of their huts to look at us, we found that some English, doubtless our friends, had encamped here the preceding night, and had only left a few hours before our arrival. Once more putting our caravan in motion we in-

creased our pace, in order to overtake them by sunset.

Two hours after leaving Salla-héa, our attention was suddenly caught by something white on the horizon fluttering in the sunlight. On a nearer approach we made out, with the aid of our glasses, three tents, and in the immediate vicinity camels to the number of twenty and more. At first we were sure they belonged to our friends,—but then why should they be encamping so early in the day? “To wait for us,” suggested Mohammad. “Of course,” we said, and rode briskly forward, happy at the prospect of again completing our caravan. Each moment the little encampment became more distinct, but each moment our perplexities increased. Our friends only had twelve camels, but already we had counted nearly thirty, grazing about among the stunted shrubs, and again we marvelled at the number of men. “They are Bedouins, by all that is true!” said my friend, with his telescope to his eye; “and fully armed, by all that is disagreeable!”

At length the horrid truth broke upon us, our friends had been stopped and made prisoners, and we were quietly riding into the same position! When at last within a hundred yards, all doubt on the subject was done away with, by their coming on foot to meet

us with very long faces, and informing us that we were all in the hands of the Philistines.

Putting a bold face on the matter, we descended from our camels, loaded our guns, and, with Mohammad, who was swelling with indignation, we went forward to demand instant release, or, at any rate, good reason for our detention. Our tescaries, or passports, were asked for, and, on their being submitted to the leader of the party, were declared "informal."

Now, seeing that if they had been written in English, instead of Arabic characters, the rascally Bedouin would have been just as wise, it was quite clear that their only object in arresting us was to relieve us of our purses. The reason they gave was, that Abbas Pasha (it being the conscription time for pressing men into the army) had issued orders to the different Bedouin chiefs, for the stoppage of all Arab felláhs* travelling across the Desert without tescaries, or with tescaries that were informal. Of course it was useless expostulating with fourteen men armed from head to foot, who could look us calmly in the face, attired as we were in wide-awakes and shooting coats, and yet come to the conclusion that we were

* *Felláh* is the Arabic term for the labouring classes in Egypt.

poor Arabs in disguise, fleeing from the conscription ! so we shrugged our shoulders, and, being only three to fourteen, surrendered at discretion.

Having come to this arrangement, we next inquired what they proposed doing with us. They led off by saying that we should travel with them night and day, without being allowed to encamp either to eat or sleep, into some unknown part of the Desert where their sheikh lived, and that he should decide our fate.

Against this course we protested most strongly, not so much for our own sakes as for those of our lady companions, who were already so fatigued with excitement and their morning's march that they hardly knew how to support themselves.

As the Bedouins seemed bent on mischief, we sent Mohammad to talk with them alone, and try and obtain some amelioration of the sentence; whilst we, retiring to the tents, watched the conference with some anxiety. At a short distance, surrounded by the Bedouins, sat our dragoman, endeavouring to assuage their malice, but which he appeared unable to do, if we might judge from their vehement gestures, and the way in which they every now and then brandished their long guns and spears over their heads.

Matters continued thus for about a quarter of an hour; and, just as words were at the highest, our astonishment may be conceived, when we saw Mohammad suddenly jump up from the ground, and, all unarmed as he was, rush at one of the Bedouins, who was, without exaggeration, bristling all over with sabres and pistols, and, first hitting him over the head, proceed to kick him on a less distinguished part of his person. Of course all conference was immediately at an end, and we were thrown into a state of the greatest confusion.

Pursuing Mohammad, who was following up his attack with immense vigour, my friend and I succeeded in catching hold of his baggy breeches, whilst the other Bedouins kept back the champion on their side, who was eager to resent the injuries received. The reason Mohammad gave for this exhibition of wrath was, that the man he attacked had said something so grossly insulting about us, that he felt bound to visit it with instant punishment.

Our enemies, now preparing their murderous-looking guns, declared that, though they did not wish to proceed to extremities with us, nothing could save Mohammad — shoot him they would: “and his blood,” they said, “be upon his own head.”

The scene that then followed baffles all my powers

of description, for, rushing pell-mell in amongst us, they did their best to get at Mohammad, whilst it required no small amount of activity on our parts always to be between him and them, as they ran and dodged about on all sides, with half-raised guns, trying to get a clear shot at him.

Not being a soldier, and, therefore, never having been in battle or in a life and death skirmish of any kind, I am unable to say at what moment a man so far abandons all thought of personal security as to charge almost cheerfully an enemy bent on his destruction, in the teeth of a murderous fire; but I suppose that, forming but a single item in dense masses of excited comrades on all sides of him, mid the rush of cavalry, and the incessant banging of cannon, self is entirely lost sight of, being swallowed up in the whirling vastness of the scene in which he is acting so small a part.

But the case was different with us—a little knot of travellers *pleasuring* it across the Desert, three of us only carrying firearms, suddenly obliged to withstand in cold blood the unwarrantable attack of fourteen men of war! I must confess that not for a single moment did I so far lose sight of my personal safety as to look cheerfully at death, even for the sake of my dragoman; I felt that it was not fair to

my friends in England, and from the commencement till the close of the contest I wished myself well out of it.

After the first burst of their anger was over, and still Mohammad remained whole and entire, our enemies withdrew a few paces; and then one of them, unslinging a small hatchet from his back, came running forward, swinging it round his head, which, when it had attained sufficient momentum, he threw with all his force right amongst us; but failing to strike its object, it buried itself in the sand behind us. Then another man repeated this manœuvre; but this time with more success, for striking one of our camel-men on the shoulder, it brought him to the ground. Blood having thus been drawn, though not to any serious extent, they seemed slightly pacified, especially as we declared, by means of our friends' dragoon, Salem, that we would certainly avenge the death of any of our party on their chief, who, not seeming to relish the fact of our pointing our guns pertinaciously on him, strove to keep back his men. However, it was not all over yet, for just as we were entering into a second conference, we discovered that Mohammad, who had rashly separated himself from us, was being hotly pursued over the sand towards Jerusalem by the man whom he had pre-

vidously kicked, and who now, with a bared scimitar of an enormous length and curve, seemed about to do for him, as our dragoman, being a stout, heavy man, was no match for the Bedouin even in a hundred yards.

Unpleasant as was Mohammad's position, I could hardly refrain from laughing, as I saw him "pounding" over the Desert, his enemy gaining on him every yard. However, as there was no time to be lost, we set off to his assistance; whilst the other Bedouins, thinking the affair was going too far, also ran to try and check their comrade's slaughtering propensities. But fast as we ran, and fast as Mohammad ran, the Bedouin with the scimitar ran faster; and before we could prevent him, he had cut, as it seemed to us, our dragoman's legs off, for down went Mohammad all in a heap, and was on the point of receiving another blow when we arrived to separate them.

This last little *divertissement* concluded, we again endeavoured, by means of Salem, to come to some amicable arrangement; and, after a good deal of talking and spear brandishing, it was finally settled that we should encamp where we were for the night, and go with them before their sheikh on the morrow.

Till a late hour we all sat in one tent discussing the events of the day, and making guesses at the

number of piastres likely to be forced from us before being allowed to go our own ways; but on one point we were all unanimous, that not a single six-pence would we offer them, even should it be the price of instant liberation.

As we thought it quite possible that the Bedouins would enter our tents during the night to see what they could lay their hands on, we each took our turn at mounting guard outside; and notwithstanding the extreme awkwardness of our position, I shall ever remember with pleasure those few moonlight hours, cold and calm, which, succeeding so immediately to the hot, feverish scene in which I had been engaged, proved such a relief as I strolled up and down between the tents.

Our enemies, whose numbers were by this time greatly increased by the frequent arrivals of wandering members of their tribe, had picketed themselves, in groups in a large circle, at some distance around our tents. Each group rejoiced in the light and warmth of a large fire, making their dark faces look doubly fierce as they hung over the flames, vehemently chatting over their day's sport, and indulging in propositions as to our future fate. Every quarter of an hour they fired off one of their long guns, which breaking upon the stillness of the

night, tended in no way to sweeten the repose of our lady friends.

Between four and five o'clock the next morning, being Easter Sunday, we were busily engaged in snatching some breakfast, whilst our servants packed the camels. The Bedouins, who had no other preparation to make for the day's march save rubbing their eyes and mounting their respective dromedaries, were of course ready long before us, and, in the most insulting manner, they shouted to us to be quick, as they pointed to the eastern horizon coloring with the near approach of day.

Whilst my friend and I were draining our coffee cups and lighting up our matutinal cigars, we observed the chief of the hostile party in deep conference with Salem, the result of which he presently communicated to us, as follows: — “ Why should there be aught than peace between the inhabitant of the Desert and the dweller in cities? Let him give the poor Bedouin 5000 piastres (equivalent to about 50*l.*), and go on his way without further molestation.” As we had no inclination to part with so many of our piastres, we declined this offer; in fact, we had made up our minds, now that the affair had gone so far, to go right through with it, and to see this Desert sheikh whom they talked about.

By the time the sun was up, our caravan, including a vast number of pilgrims, foot travellers to Jerusalem, whom we had picked up on the road, was well "under weigh" — for what particular spot, we were as yet in a happy state of ignorance.

As the sun rose, the heat became intense, till by noon it was well nigh insupportable. Far and wide, on all sides of us, stretched the hot glaring Desert, broken up into innumerable lakes, creeks, and rivers, by reason of the "mirage," — a phenomenon of which I had read so much, and indeed had seen on several occasions, but never in such perfection as to-day. At times the whole expanse of Desert before us seemed to melt away, giving place to a shipless sea, the coast line irregular with numberless promontories and bluff headlands. Stunted shrubs appeared as mighty trees, beneath whose branches we trusted to pass for just one moment of cool shade; but the next minute our disappointment was complete, by seeing them crushed beneath the feet of the camels on which we rode.

But the "mirage" was not only at work with the Desert, but also with our very selves. Was this not Easter Sunday? and had not our friend, a clergyman, proposed, a few day's back, that we should keep it as a holy-day — pitching our tents, giving our men and

camels a day's rest, and listening to his reading of the 'service? Yet, here had this greatest of all Christian festivals arrived, and instead of the snug encampment surrounded with the camels at rest, which we seemed to have seen so distinctly marked on the horizon before us, we found ourselves launched on a sea of uncertainty, prisoners in the hands of a gang of armed Bedouins, who were leading us whither we knew not.

And so the morning passed; and, when the noon-tide sun had expended all its fierceness upon our captive caravan, we were still being hurried over the hot Desert sands.

Towards sunset, the Bedouins informed us that we were not far from their encampment, and we began to indulge in surmises as to our reception by their sheikh. The ground began to undulate; and soon a few palms, overshadowing small patches of half-choked burnt-up vegetation told us we were approaching the residence of man.

Arrived at the brow of a gentle but extensive slope, a most delicious scene burst upon our view. Accustomed as we had been for the last week to nothing but the unvarying Desert flat, we could not believe our eyes, as we gazed upon the beautiful picture so suddenly spread out before us.

At some distance below the spot where we stood, the interval filled in with trees, shrubs, and under-wood of various colours and kinds, lay a fresh water lake. Numerous wild-fowl sat swinging lazily on its mirror-like surface, whilst, not far from the water's edge, among the trees, was the Bedouin encampment to which we were bound, consisting of a few mud huts, and numbers of black canvass tents.

So perplexed had we been, during the heated hours of the day, with the numberless rivers, creeks, and lakes, which had been starting up on all sides of us at every step we took, that it was some time before we could persuade ourselves that this was not a more perfect form of *mirage*. However, after winding down among the acacias and flowering lupins, and approaching so near that we could hear its tiny wavelets breaking upon the shingle, we no longer doubted, but rejoiced exceedingly, and instantly felt equal to anything that might befall us — even death itself, we agreed, would not, after all, be so very bad in such a spot.

As we approached the village, some of our captors rode on ahead of us, and, as we heard afterwards, informed the "sheikh el-belled" (village chief) that Allah in his goodness had enabled them

to take possession of a caravan of "Jews and dogs;" but whether the latter epithet applied to us, or the pilgrims which accompanied us, we were not able, nor did we deem it worth while, to determine. An immense *posse* of women and children came out to greet us, and, as they laughed immoderately and threw stones at us, they tended not a little to increase our vexation.

The first thing to be done, after pitching our tents in this very nest of Bedouins, was to see the sheikh; and notice having been sent us that he was ready to receive us, we left the ladies under the care of one of the dragomen, and, with Mohammad, we repaired to the chief's residence — a capacious mud hut, covered over with straw, at one end of which, on a carpet, surrounded with the principal men of the tribe, he reposed; and a picturesque group indeed they formed in their crimson robes and "kephias," or head dresses, of Damascus silk. On a carpet opposite the sheikh we were motioned to take our seats, and the discussion commenced. At a glance we could see that we were in a fair way of instant liberation (for the sheikh and his advisers were evidently very frightened at the extent to which matters had gone), and that though we had been advertised as "Jews and dogs," it was very

plain that we were English travellers, who had been stopped in the most inexcusable manner, when on their way across the Desert to Jerusalem.

Being called upon by the sheikh to state our grievance, we passed his remark on to Mahommad, who had taken his seat behind us, and whom, now that we turned round to bid him come forward, we found, as it were, stripping for the conference. He had already removed his sabre from his side, kicked off his shoes, and loosened his sash; but as we were in a hurry to commence, he just delayed one moment while he pushed his fez more towards the back of his head, in order to display to greater advantage his copper countenance, burning with just indignation in our behalf; and then, by a series of small jumps, which he performed with a "cork-like buoyancy, quite wonderful in a man of his size and weight," he gained the centre of the hut. With the utmost deliberation, striking his loose bags backwards between his legs, he seated himself on his heels, raised his arms above his head, and calling on Allah to witness the truth of what he was about to say, he streamed forth for the space of a quarter of an hour a host of winged words in proof of the rascally way in which we had been stopped and carried away prisoners; and how that, we being

princes of the blood royal of England, there was no doubt, that if the affair was noised abroad, Her Majesty Queen Victoria would certainly send a great army to exterminate all the Bedouins that breathed !

Mohammad having brought his narration to a close, the men that had captured us were called upon for their story, with which they complied, half-a-dozen always speaking, or rather shouting, at the same time : then Mohammad interrupted them ; then they interrupted Mohammad ; then the sheikh tried to interrupt both ; then the effendi that was noting down all that was said interrupted everybody — altogether it was the most intricate wrangle that it is possible to conceive ; till at length the sheikh, laying his stick on to the shoulders of every one within his reach, and imposing silence, proceeded to give sentence.

He apologized to us for the treatment we had received; said that his men had exceeded his orders; that they had stopped us merely in the hope of extorting money ; that he, the sheikh, disapproved of the whole proceeding ; and, finally, assured us that he would send the culprits in irons to Cairo, there to receive punishment at the hands of the Egyptian government.

Everything having been settled in this pleasant manner, at least so far as we were concerned, we made our salaams to the sheikh, and retired to our tents; but not before we had made him promise to allow us an escort of his own men, to ensure our not being stopped again whilst travelling through his territory.

As darkness had already settled over the Desert, we determined to risk passing the night among the Bedouins, as Mohammad assured us that we should be quite safe; for, as he expressed it, the sheikh was evidently an "*homme d'esprit*," and one who respected us, as being Englishmen and gentlemen.

Placing our pistols beneath our pillows, and attaching our trunks to the tent pole, we went quietly off to sleep, and awoke as usual in perfect safety.

By the time the sun was up, we had breakfasted, and put our caravan once more in motion. Accompanied by the promised escort, and numbers of foot pilgrims, we formed quite a strong party, mustering altogether about fifty men.

We encamped at sunset after a march of eight hours, having had the mountains of Suez on our right all day.

This will show how much we had been taken out of our way ; for we ought to have been near the sea coast, and had about as much business with the Sucz mountains as with the Himalayahs.

CHAP. XXI.

EL-ARISH.

ONCE more our own masters, we pushed on fast and cheerfully for Palestine; we had ceased to regard our vagrant life as a novelty, and had as much settled down to it as if we had been at it for years.

The packing and unpacking of our trunks twice a-day was no longer the inconvenience it had been ; “man wants but little here below,” and we always took care to arrange that “little” uppermost in our portmanteaus. We positively luxuriated in a motion which, when first we mounted our camels, nearly dislocated our whole persons, but which now swayed us gently off to sleep whenever we were so minded. Thanks to our tremendous appetites, we used to dine without complaining, day after day with no variety, upon hashed mutton and maccaroni ; in fact, we relished everything except the contents of our water skins ; and, notwithstanding all our efforts, we could not even tolerate the water which we carried along with us, and which in the Desert

formed such a very necessary ingredient to our state of perfect happiness. But it was no wonder, for as it became each day more filthy and discoloured, we found it always a little ahead of our efforts to rough it. Bad as it was the first day after drawing it fresh from the well, it was a great deal worse by the next evening, after an exposure of eight hours, in a hot sun, on a camel's back; for it had attained a rich brown colour, and to the taste was very like what I could fancy water might be in which a quantity of boots had been boiled; and therefore so nasty, that in order to drink it we were obliged to put all manner of nice things into it, and then, shutting our eyes and thinking of Soyer, to fancy it a new kind of soup.

The poor pilgrims who followed our caravan drank of it with avidity; and as we had given the dragoman directions to let them have as much as they wanted, so long as our own supply did not run short, we were rejoiced to see that the *potage à la Désert* which we had voted so nasty was appreciated in one quarter at least.

At sunset, on the third day after taking leave of the Bedouins, we encamped in a little oasis beneath some palms, about a mile from a place called Gatiéh; and whilst dinner was preparing, we shouldered our

guns for the chance of a partridge, and walked off to see the remnants of the wall and fortifications that Dr. Robinson speaks of.

They crown the summit of a gentle elevation, and were built by Napoleon I. during his Eastern campaigns, to serve as a link in the chain of communication which he had established between El-Arish, the frontier town of Syria, and Cairo : large mounds and pottery fragments, scattered over a large area, bear silent witness to the size of the ancient town of Cassim, which once existed here.

Close to the wall before alluded to is a large well, which was sunk by Mohammad Ali, for the use of the caravans passing between Syria and Egypt ; and on the summit of a sand hill is a handsome tomb of an Arab Saint.

On the day after leaving Gatičh we were to pass, according to our charts, the spot where once flowed Gihor, "the river of Egypt;" and about noon we certainly did cross what appeared to be the bed of a river long since dry. But as the term "river of Egypt" would seem to refer to the Nile, whence came "a revenue in harvests," we passed away an hour, after our day's march, disputing as to the correctness of our maps ; but coming, after much talk, to no very definite conclusion, we dropped the

subject until we should arrive at the river of El-Arish, which we knew was another candidate for the title “river of Egypt.”

We were now travelling onwards in the hope every day of seeing the sea, from which we made out we could not be very far distant; and on the morning of *April 1st*, having reached some high table-land, the blue expanse of the Mediterranean appeared on our left, distant some three or four miles. Remembering the date, we refrained from immediate rejoicing, until we were quite certain of its reality—just balancing in our minds the possibility of its being “mirage.”

At night we encamped at a considerable elevation; and sitting after dinner in our tent-doors, with our coffee and chibouques, we gazed upon the ocean-like Desert stretching far away southwards, in one vast, unbroken plain, to the bases of the blue mountains of Akaba. The whole scene, steeped in the deepening purple of sunset, was completely divested of the barren and desolate appearance which it otherwise would have had; and, as we dreamed over our pipes, the ever invisible, but constantly heard, desert bells sounding faintly in the distance, we were almost inclined to doubt the fact of our being so far away from green trees and civilisation.

As darkness crept over the Desert, we were enabled to distinguish the camp-fires of another party, at a great distance off in the plain below; but being uncertain whether they belonged to travellers like ourselves, or to Bedouins, we gave orders to keep our own fires low for fear of attracting their attention.

During the night it rained heavily, and blew "great guns." Nor was the sweetness of my repose enhanced by being awoke, a little after midnight, with the canvass sides of the tent flapping and banging on my face. After shouting to Mohammad for about half an hour—for I had no idea of turning out myself in the cold—I managed to make him understand that our house was on the point of forsaking us, when he got up, and, with the help of the camel-men, put matters right again.

The first streak of daylight saw us striking our tents, and putting our caravan in motion for El-Arish, for we had a long day's march in prospect, and we wished to make the most of the cool morning hours. Before starting, we directed our glasses down into the plain, in order to arrive at the meaning of the fires which we had seen on the previous evening, and found, to our satisfaction, that they had proceeded from an encampment of travellers such

as we were, and whose long, serpent-like caravan was now winding over the Desert in the direction of Palestine.

Towards the middle of the day, having both been, as it were, travelling along opposite sides of the same triangle, we met at the apex; and, after firing our guns into the air by way of salutation, we joined forces, and journeyed on towards El-Arish in company.

During the afternoon, we came upon a large salt lake, which it was necessary to cross, in order to shorten our day's march. Our poor camels, already taxed beyond their powers of endurance, by reason of the unusually soft nature of the sand over which they had been toiling since an early hour, were hardly in condition for the attempt; for a camel, the instant you take him off the sand, is considerably more awkward than a duck out of water. But if you not only take him off the sand, but bid him cross a sheet of water, though not more than a foot in depth in any one part, yet, with the bottom as smooth and slippery as ice, I must confess that, vulgarly speaking, "you hardly do your rights by him."

The advance part of our caravan, consisting of the camels belonging to the Americans and Prussians,

had already commenced their hazardous undertaking when we arrived. Nor were our notions of the facility of transit indulged in any longer, when we saw that one of the camels (I suppose a weak one, or one more heavily laden than the others), had slipped down and broken its leg. After in vain trying to raise it again, the Arabs began to remove its burden ; and the lamenting of the poor animal, as they removed each article of baggage, preparatory to leaving it behind, was truly piteous. Of course, having broken its leg, it was of no further use to us, and it would have been impossible to have carried him along with us. As it was evidently in great pain, we wished to shoot it at once; but one of the men promising to remain behind, to perform this last sad duty, we proceeded on our journey, and arriving all of us in safety at the further side, we pushed on to El-Arish.

The approach to El-Arish is among an infinity of sand-hills, some of which are so steep that, in descending them, I fully expected my camel's own weight would prove too much for the strength of his fore legs, and that he would fall on his nose, inevitably pitching me over his head. However, without any such catastrophe, after a ride of ten hours and a half, we pitched our tents beneath the walls

of the frontier town, which, for a place not likely ever to see much of a siege, is strongly fortified.

Here the baggage of all our camel-men and some Jews, who formed part of our caravan, was submitted to a strict examination by the Egyptian custom-house officers, though ours, by the wholesome administration of a small *bucksheesh*, was exempt.

On reviewing our forces, we found that four camels had dropped by the way from sheer fatigue, and had been left as food for vultures; whilst, of the large body of foot pilgrims who had accompanied us from Cairo, several were missing. We were assured that Allah would take care of them, and bring them all safely to Jerusalem; but, unless by the intervention of some divine miracle, I much fear that the poor fellows, who had left their homes and families far away in India, and the furthest East, to do homage at the shrines of Mecca and the Holy City, found their last resting-places in the Desert. So frequent must be the instances of pilgrims who never find their way home again, that one does not know how sufficiently to admire the devotion which they bear to their God and creed, in thus forsaking all, and going forth in thousands, year after year, to almost certain death.

On inquiring whether the camel, which we had left in the salt lake with the broken leg, had been despatched as promised, we were perfectly astounded to hear that he had been left to die of famine and in pain. The only excuse they gave was, "That it was the will of Allah; that it was fated this camel should die of hunger and a broken leg; and," as one of the men said, "rather would I shoot myself than, by shooting the camel, alter the course of fate."

After we had dined, we addressed a note to the American gentlemen, asking them to pipes and coffee in our tent, but received their regrets "that a previous engagement would prevent them accepting our kind invitation," as their Prussian friends were going to partake of brandy and water and "gin sling" in their tent: however, they hoped that we would bring our chibouques and "cut in" with them. So accordingly, having sent our pipes on before, we followed presently in the wake of the portly Mohammad bearing a fanoose.

As we anticipated, we spent a most uproarious evening over the aforesaid decoction of hot water, gin, and lemon-peel; and the almost brotherly terms which the Americans were on with the four Prussian Counts at once surprised and amused us, "sweet

converse" being quite out of the question, since neither understood the other's language: indeed, Arabic was the only language common to both, and of that but *one* word was known to either. Need I tell any Eastern traveller, that that word was "Taib!" (Good!)

We arrived first at the Americans' tent this evening, so were witnesses to their mode of saluting the Prussians, which was as follows: —

The tent door being drawn aside to admit them, the four continental Counts entered, first removing their hats as they gave us "*Bon soir.*" "*Hilloa!*" shouted our jovial Americans, "here you are! how d'ye get along? sit down." "*Je vous remercie mille fois,*" answered the Prussians in chorus. Here came a pause; for though the Americans looked excessively happy themselves, and seemed disposed to render their guests so also, they were not able to express their ideas except by a series of gymnastics, which, though they eventually succeeded, was a work of time.

However, the table, loaded with sundry black bottles, cigars, and a large jug of hot water, backed by the truly hospitable countenances of our entertainers, took less time to explain the order of the evening than did their well-meant dumb motions,

and numerous ejaculations of the *one* word “Taib !” I was completely non-plussed at the very commencement of the evening by the senior of the two Americans, who, in pressing the contents of the black bottles upon his guests, turned to me to render “gin sling” in French. As I was unable to assist him, he resorted to his own method, which was by collecting the several ingredients of this delightful compound, and pushing them across the table, ’mid a perfect volley of “Taibs.” But, as I said before, we managed some how to spend a most sociable evening. The “gin sling” was voted the only thing worth drinking, the cigars the only “weeds” worth smoking, albeit they came from the “far West,” and were tremendously large and tremendously strong ; and we all talked a great deal ; and the Prussians said something that the Americans didn’t understand, and the Americans said something that the Prussians didn’t understand ; and then they laughed heartily at some joke that had never been made—for they could not have laughed at what had been said, since neither understood what the other had been talking about. And so the evening passed away ; and towards midnight we retired to our several tents, the Americans declaring to us, in an under tone, that the Prussians were “no end of bricks ;” whilst they

on their side expressed this affection for the Americans, "Mon Dieu, ces Américains ! mais ils sont charmants garçons !"

Before leaving El-Arish, we sent Mohammad to the governor of the town, with the letter from the Çadi at Belbeys concerning the lost watch, and were soon after waited upon by one of his rawasses to request our attendance.

Squeezing our way through the bazaars, we arrived presently at the house of his Excellency. A knot of pipe-bearers and soldiers made way for us to pass, ushering us immediately into the audience chamber—by no means a magnificent one.

At the further end of the room, on a low mud-built divan, running all round, reclined the governor, surrounded with his effendis and learned men. Having made our salaams, we took our seats on his right; and Mohammad having squatted on his heels immediately in front, we spent the next few minutes in silence, sipping the coffee and puffing the pipes which were offered us. Without entering into the details of all that passed, I shall content myself with saying, that notwithstanding all the wise suggestions of the effendis, the governor found it impossible to render us any immediate assistance in the matter, but promised to lay violent hands on any suspicious-

looking individual that arrived in the town from Belbeys, and held out hopes that the next month or two would see my friend in possession of his stolen property. His Excellency then went on to say that, since my friend had lost his watch, the key belonging to it could be of no further use to him; and that as he also possessed a watch, the wondrous dimensions of which he took this little opportunity of displaying for our admiration, he would feel obliged by my friend presenting him with his key, to supply the place of one which he had lost some months back. Accordingly, the same evening my friend sent up his key, which certainly was of no further use to him, since he now saw little chance of ever recovering the watch to which it belonged.

CHAP. XXII.

PALESTINE.

WE were now in Syria, and though not quite clear of the Desert, our eyes were continually relieved by broad stretches of grass-land, which, to us, seemed deliciously bright and green.

On the second day from El-Arish, we passed, in the early morning, a spot marked in our maps as Rephia, where two simple granite pillars informed us that we stood on the boundary line between Asia and Africa. And now, in truth, I voted myself a rapid traveller, as, with a short preparatory run, and unassisted by any winged Pegasus, or any of those locomotive carpets one reads about in the "Arabian Nights," I leaped in a moment of time from one continent to the other.

In early days, when first one went to school, and was lectured by one's tutor, from the pages of "Arrowsmith," upon the relative positions of Asia and Africa; and when the extent of one's topographical knowledge associated aught that was Asiatic with the streets of Ispahan, or the far-off

plains of Siberia; and aught that was African with the mud-huts of Hottentots, or the jungles of Caffre-land—in those days I little thought that the time would come when, during a *morning's ride*, I should pass from one great quarter of the globe to another—yet so it was.

Soon after losing sight of Rephia, a sudden descent took us into the village of Khân-Younes; and as our caravan wound down among its gardens and groves of prickly pear, the atmosphere laden with the odour of the sweet lupin, it gave us, as Eöthen so happily observed, quite the sensation of bathing, coming so suddenly out of the hot, arid Desert into the midst of such a bouquet; and we appreciated in a slight degree what must have been the feelings of the Israelites on first entering the promised land, after their forty years' sojourn in the Desert.

Into a small plot of ground in the centre of the village, surrounded with a wooden paling, we were turned, whilst a couple of guardians took us into custody, preparatory to seeing us all safely imprisoned in quarantine at Gaza. After waiting here for about half an hour, our caravan once more streamed forth upon the park-like plain which intervenes between these towns. Our exit was not

a triumphal one, but, like a plague-stricken troop, we marched slowly and mournfully along. Guards before and guards behind marshalled us onwards, ever and anon shouting to distant children, playing in the road, to flee from us, and to the women, to get them into their houses whilst we passed; and in every way treating us as if we had been one and all in the last stage of an autumn Cairene plague. Joke and laugh as we might, we could not but feel that we were about the most wicked, sinful people on the face of the earth.

At sunset we arrived at our quarantine quarters, outside the town of Gaza. The prison gates were opened to receive us, and, when the last of our caravan had wound into the desolate court-yard, they were closed heavily upon us, and we were requested to consider ourselves under arrest for the next five days.

For the next hour we were in a state of the greatest confusion, unpacking the camels, and each one selfishly, but openly, striving to select the cleanest-looking cell for himself. However, before it was quite dark, we had managed to shake down as comfortably as could be expected, taking into consideration the positively filthy state of our new quarters. Free as we were then from anything like

plague, we were all seriously of opinion that the next five days would about "do for us," or else that we should be let out of quarantine, carrying along with us the seeds of contagion.

The form of the quarantine quarters at Gaza reminded me very much of an English cattle-market—*viz.*, four high stone walls, enclosing several rows of sheds, or rather cells, at right angles to each other, making a square, with a well in the centre. At one corner, and a little apart from the cells allotted to us, were the quarters of the "medico," an Italian doctor in charge of the quarantine, consisting of a few consecutive apartments on the ground floor, with a small wooden paling and a few shrubs in front. Even this residence had a melancholy, half-starved appearance, but was certainly seen to advantage when contrasted with the surrounding buildings.

Insupportable as were the long, tedious hours of the day, night brought us no relief—sleep visited not the pillows of the wretched inmates of the Gaza quarantine; for the countless "B flats," and myriads of fleas, with which the walls and floors of our cells were alive during the day, seemed all to assert equal claims to a share of the beds, which we fondly fancied were intended only for us.

On the evening of the last day in quarantine we were all ordered out into the court-yard, and, being drawn up in line, the "medico" advanced to the front, and, after a few preliminary questions addressed to each on the state of his or her health, the word was given to "Show tongues," which we accordingly did, in a manner that would have led any one ignorant of quarantine regulations to suppose that we were all expressing the most profound contempt for the poor medico.

At sunrise the next morning, to our great joy, we cleared out of quarantine; and bidding Mohammad meet us on the further side of the town with the camels and horses—for my friend and I had hired animals of the latter class to carry us to Jerusalem—we strolled with one of the other dragomen through the bazaars of Gaza.

Independently of the great Scriptural interest attached to this town, as one of the five Philistine cities, Gaza as it now stands is an exceedingly beautiful town, surrounded with large olive plantations, and dense groves of pomegranate and lemon trees. By far the larger portion of it is built of stone, which, when compared with other second-class Eastern towns, gives it a very imposing appearance. Nor is the interior so disappointing as

is often the case in Syria, for, being on the high road for caravans passing from Beyrouth and Damascus to the Suez and Cairo markets, its bazaars are at all times well filled, and rich in all kinds of merchandise. A hill to the east of the town was pointed out to us as the spot to which Samson carried the gates on the night of his escape.

Leaving Gaza behind us, we now rode on through a rich country towards Askelon, passing, in about two hours from the time of starting, the brook Eseol. The modern Askelon is only a small village, to the north of the site of the old town, almost within reach of the waves of the Mediterranean, and prettily imbedded in a grove of olive and date trees. As we intended pitching our tents at Ashdod, or Sdoud, so called by the Arabs, we sent on the camels, whilst we remained to partake of lunch amid the ruins of the old town.

Its traces are so faded and scattered as scarcely to be noticed, and all our attentions were devoted to some lofty stone walls and fast-decaying fortifications, of the date of the Crusades, situated on some high ground immediately overhanging the sea. After remaining here for an hour or so, wandering about in the shade of the numerous trees, which cast their cool reflection upon the old grey walls, we

continued our ride to Ashdod, where we arrived a little before sunset. Of the ancient town there are little or no traces remaining.

We pitched our tents upon a grassy knoll close to the Arab village, whence we had a delightful view over the plain towards Askelon and the sea. Whilst we were at dinner, some friends of the dragoman came out of the village, to tell us to be sure and keep a strict watch during the night ; for that a few hours previously, at a distance only of a few miles, a great battle had taken place between two hostile Bedouin tribes, and that marauders would surely be about.

On receiving this information, we sent up a request to the sheikh of the village, to be provided with a sufficient guard to prevent our being robbed ; but the good man, not liking to give occasion to either of the hostile parties to find fault with him, politely declined ; his excuse being, "that the well-known bravery of Europeans would surely enable them to take care of themselves !"

It was on occasions of this kind, when Mohammad knew from experience that there was no real danger to anticipate, that his great pluck showed itself. Accordingly, the last thing at night, just as we were on the point of putting our lights out and

getting into bed, he appeared at the tent door—his Bagdad capote folded round him, his head tied up in a handkerchief, and his loaded carbine under his arm, giving him very much the appearance of a Ramsgate bathing-woman about to embark on foreign service—and stated his intention of watching over the safety of the camp till the sun rose.

To prove his zeal in our behalf, he used to bother us for the first hour with challenging all the dogs and jackalls that came near the tents, and frequently blazing away with his carbine; but this only lasted for an hour, and then he used to go to sleep, which apparent neglect of his duty we never said anything about, as it enabled us to follow his example.

The next day being Sunday, we had intended remaining encamped; but as, at an early hour, the Sdoudites commenced crowding round our tents, and we feared their being seized with too irresistible a passion to appropriate some of our effects, we packed our camels and went on our journey to Jerusalem.

Having so lately disembarked from our Desert voyage, the extreme beauty and fertility of the country that we rode through, after leaving Ashdod, taxed our powers of appreciation almost too severely, and, not content with regarding it from my saddle,

I allowed my horse to wander where he chose among the camels, whilst I lingered on foot far behind the caravan, walking wherever the grass was tallest, picking whatever flowers were fairest, and resting at odd moments under any tree the dense foliage of which was an excuse for day-dreaming.

Late in the afternoon we entered quite a Saxon forest of holm-oak, through which we continued to ride for nearly an hour; nor was it until the shadows of the trees on either side of us lay lengthening along the glades, that we caught sight of the white walls and minarets of Ramlah.

Passing on our left a very beautiful tower of Saracenic architecture, marked in our maps as the "Martyr's Tower," we rode round to the south side of the town, where we encamped on a sort of common, without furze bushes, for the night. Here, also, as at Ashdod, we were advised to keep a good watch, as some English travellers, who had pitched their tents four days previously in the same spot, had had them cut into during the night, and a considerable amount of property stolen.

Bad as this news sounded at first, our spirits very soon rose again, when we considered how decidedly adverse the chances were to such an event occurring again for some time. The next morning, as soon as

we had finished breakfast, we mounted our horses, intending to employ the day in a visit to the town of Joppa, or, as it is now called, Jaffa.

Leaving Ramlah, riding in a north-westerly direction, we skirted the plain of Sharon, which lay stretched out before us bright with the morning sun, and perfectly crimson with the countless poppies which grew in the springing corn. An hour's ride brought us to the small town of Lydda, in the Arab tongue Ludd. Here we saw a handsome tomb, which the inhabitants informed us contained the bones of St. George the champion of Christendom ; they would also have us believe that he was born here, notwithstanding the strong claims that Cappadocia urges to having cradled him in infancy.

Striking across the plain seawards, we entered Jaffa at noon ; and forcing a passage for our horses along its narrow and crowded streets, we made our way to the house of our Consul, Assad-el-Kayat, a Syrian, but a man of some little note, and who for many years has held this office under our Government. The Consul himself, we were sorry to find, had gone to Jerusalem on business ; but his brother received and entertained us most kindly. His house faces the sea, and joins on, or is very close, to the Armenian Convent, which served Napoleon I. for a

hospital, and where was enacted that dreadful tragedy — the poisoning its sick and wounded inmates by wholesale. The Consul's house is furnished in the European fashion, the room in which we sat being lighted by means of a bow-window, immediately overlooking the small and incommodious port of Jaffa. After our long ride, we were glad of a few minutes' rest on his divans, and of an opportunity of refreshing ourselves with the coffee which was offered us.

Our host placed himself at our disposal, to show us all that would be likely to interest us in Jaffa. First, he procured us admission into the convent before alluded to; then, mounting higher up into the town, he took us into an antiquated but very wretched house, and, bidding us look around, to say whether we saw anything remarkable. On our obeying his instructions, and then answering in the negative, he said, "This is the very house which belonged to Simon the tanner, and where tarried for certain days St. Peter." As we saw no reason for disbelieving so probable a fact, we were induced to leave the house with more reverential feelings than we had on entering; though I must confess that it pleased me more to think I was in the self-same town where, beyond a doubt, St. Peter lived, than

standing in the room about which there was merely a tradition as to its having been the lodging of the Apostle.

The town of Jaffa is very imposingly built on a promontory of some elevation, surrounded with orange and pomegranate groves of almost tropical luxuriance. Fortunately for us, our visit happened to be made on a market day; and outside the walls of the town, shaded by numerous acacias, had been erected long rows of gaily-colored booths. Merchants of all classes added their voices to the general hubbub, eloquent in praise of their own wares. Here you might expend a few piastres in native fruits—there as many pounds in horses. The seller of sherbets rattled his brass cups, as he passed from group to group, setting forth in a stentorian voice *but half the real price* of his lemon, sugar, and water mixture.

After our three weeks of Desert solitude, such a scene of noise and excitement proved nearly too much for us; but at last we managed to tear ourselves away, and, mounting our horses, we retraced our road to Ramlah.

I shall never forget the exquisitely delightful ride we had back to our encampment, across the plain of Sharon. The sun, as it sank towards the Western horizon, threw a flood of light and color over the

whole country far and near, making equally distinct the ears of corn and poppies of Sharon, and the distant crags of the mountains of Judæa. We were not sorry to arrive at length at our encampment, our appetites sharpened by our long day's ride.

Ali, the dragoman who had accompanied us to Jaffa, whose horse had not been quite in such good condition as ours even at the commencement of the day, and who had been obliged to drop behind, rode into the camp whilst we were chatting outside the tents, waiting for dinner. His poor animal showed such evident signs of distress that we all gathered round to pity it. Its owner, a native of Ramlah, who formed one of the circle, was so vexed that his horse had not acquitted itself creditably, that, to our surprise and disgust, and before we could prevent him, he drew the sword which hung at his side, and, swinging it over his head, brought it down edge-ways on to the horse's back with such force that he made a gash of an inch and a half at least in length. I have no doubt that he would have repeated this atrocious act of cruelty if we had allowed him, and fortunate it was for the poor creature that we were so near. Our indignation was unbounded, and mustering all the Arabic of which we were masters, we expended it in abusing to the utmost of our

power this unwarrantable exhibition of anger, and finished by asking him in English, "Where he thought he was likely to go to?"

Happy as is the average existence of an Arab horse, he is ever subject to ~~the~~ savage attacks at the hands of his Moslem owner; and though without number are the romantic tales which delight us in England of the affection shown to animals in the East, yet, in the face ~~of~~ them all, I am inclined to think that, if the chance was given to any experienced sensible old Arab horse of exchanging his lot with an English roadster, and commencing life again, there would be little doubt of his availing himself of it.

CHAP. XXIII.

JERUSALEM.

So far had we come with our camels; but we now bade them adieu, for henceforward, till the end of our journey, our tents and baggage were to be carried by mules. It was like parting with old friends. But whatever sorrow was felt on the occasion was on our side: *they* must have been only too pleased to be quit of the trees and flowers of Palestine, and to be on their way back to their beloved Desert; so we watched them departing, burdenless, in long file from the walls of Ramlah, till they were quite out of sight, almost regretting that they moved so gaily and pleasantly away from us. From Ramlah to Jerusalem it is one day's journey; and seeing that the mules which had been promised us at some dismal anti-sunrise hour this morning had not made their appearance (as indeed we had expected) by the time we had finished breakfast, towards nine o'clock, we mounted our horses, and taking one of the dragomen with us, left Mohammad to follow when he

could ; as, if we failed to arrive at the Holy City before sunset, we should find the gates closed for the night — and a lodging on the cold ground till sunrise the next morning, even on the Mount of Olives or in the valley of Jehoshaphat, we hardly thought desirable.

The first part of our ride lay across a wide plain, bounded towards the east by the long rugged chain of the mountains of Judæa, upon the further side of which we knew the Holy City lay. For some days past their broken summits, purpled by distance, had intercepted all further glimpses into Palestine ; but now that we were fast approaching them, and could even discern the bushes and brakes which filled the clefts in their rocky sides, how fraught with interest became the very road we were following, and which a few miles on was lost to view among their defiles !

In talking of the Holy Land I have been charged by some of my friends with “ pumping up ” an amount of enthusiasm I did not really feel. Without denying the charge, I can only say, that if I could have “ pumped up ” a little more than I did, during that ride among the mountains of Judæa, and when at every turn of the road we thought to catch sight of the minarets of Jerusalem, I would have done so gladly, so sure am I that all the happiness I felt

on the occasion would, if possible, have been enhanced.

At noon we entered the first defiles of the mountains, considerably to the south-west of Ramlah ; and toiling during four hot sultry hours continuously up among their rocky gorges, we passed, about four o'clock, the little village of Emmaus, which hung to the mountain side, almost hidden from view among its olive and orange groves.

Certain now that our day's journey was drawing to a close, we all became anxious as to who should be the first to see the Holy City ; and the road only admitting of our riding in single file, each one might have been detected endeavouring to distract the other's attention to something quite unworthy of notice in the rear, so as to put his own horse into the leading place. But as we rode on, gaining hill-top after hill-top, and still there was yet another hill-top on beyond, our heads literally ached with excitement, till, a little before sunset, all our expectations were set at rest by turning a shoulder of the mountain, and finding ourselves almost within a stone's throw of its castellated walls.

Up to this point I had been actuated by all those feelings which any one sitting at home in England, planning a tour through the Holy Land, would natu-

rally perceive pervading his mind at the thought of loitering morning after morning in the bright sunshine of the East among those spots, and gazing upon those scenes, which must have been so familiar to the Saviour of the world ; but now that I am once more at home, thinking over a tour which I have concluded instead of planning, I am quite clear in saying, that on the very instant of my coming in sight of Jerusalem they all dispersed themselves, nor was I again under their influence, except at very rare intervals, during my residence in Palestine.

All the way from Emmaus I had been striving to realise the fact of my riding over the same ground so often traversed by our Lord ; and I trust to my reader's imagination, more than to any words of mine, to form a due estimate of the manner in which that mysterious awe, which for some hours past had been taking hold of our minds, was so completely violated by the sudden appearance of three or four "hoteltouters," who, whilst the words, "There is Jerusalem!" were still warm on our lips, rushed from various hiding-places upon us, and flourishing large printed cards in our faces, set forth in wretched English the peculiar advantages of the several hotels to which they belonged. It was no use our declining their services, they were as obstinately anxious to

direct our choice of lodgings, as any little London vagabond is to bear the weight of the parcel you have a fancy to carry in your hand instead of your pocket.

Putting ourselves at last, from the purest motives of self-defence, under the guidance of the most respectable of the "touters," we entered the city through the Jaffa gate, situated at the head of the Valley of Gihon; and passing the open space in front of the old towers of Hippicus, where was a motley assemblage of pilgrims, horses, and baggage-mules, and descending for a short distance a steep and very noisy street, risking our horses' knees at every step, we took the first turning to the left, below the Pool of Hezekiah, and soon after dismounted at the door of Mr. Hauser's Mediterranean Hotel.

As in Cairo you engage a dragoman, so in Jerusalem your first thought is for a guide, whose business it is—no matter whether he be Christian or Mussulman—to have all the points of interest connected with the Holy City at his fingers' ends. It so chanced that the man who applied to us, as we sat at breakfast the morning after our arrival, for a situation was a Christian. But as there are almost as many different classes of Christians in Jerusalem as there are sects of Protestants in London, perhaps

it will be as well to add that he was a Latin Catholic, by name Giuseppe.

Considering how numerous are the detailed descriptions of Jerusalem at present before the public, I have not the least intention of trespassing upon my readers' time, by attempting what so many abler men have done before I was in existence—to say nothing of a topographical account of the city being mainly interesting to those only who are actually on the spot, or who have but just returned with the ruined palace of Herod, or the house of Santa Veronica, still vividly present to their minds' eye.

Following Giuseppe's guidance down the shady side of the Via Dolorosa, stopping every dozen yards, as one would do in a picture gallery, to do little more than glance at a spot which ought to have been invested in our minds, as Christian travellers, with the deepest interest, we made our exit, on the east side of the city, through St. Stephen's Gate, in the shade of which a small knot of Turkish soldiers, their muskets left to take care of themselves in a corner, lay stretched on the ground, playing at draughts.

Standing beneath the old wall of the Temple, and looking across the deep Valley of Jehoshaphat, which sweeps southwards far below the city, our eyes fell

upon the Mount of Olives, rising abruptly before us. At its foot, on the further side of the Brook Kidron, lay the Garden of Gethsemane, its extent marked out by a low stone wall, enclosing eight aged olive trees, which tradition fondly asserts to be the very ones which witnessed our Saviour's agony on the night before His crucifixion.

Descending the steep side of Mount Moriah, and crossing over the Brook Kidron by means of a small bridge hard by the chapel erected over the tomb of the Virgin, we presently bent our heads as we passed through the low arched doorway which leads into Gethsemane. Long before I had seen this garden, which of all spots in or about Jerusalem I had thought would interest me the most, I had formed not only a pleasing, but what I believed to be a true notion of its character, from that pretty sketch which Mr. Bartlett gives in his "Walks about Jerusalem."

To say that I was disappointed, hardly expresses the exact state of mind in which I saw Gethsemane with my own instead of Mr. Bartlett's eyes.

Had it not been for the fact of my having just descended Mount Moriah and crossed over the Brook Kidron, I could have fancied myself standing, during the Dog Days, in the kitchen garden of a bran new villa at the back of Torquay, or any other of our

English watering-places, the peculiarities of which are, I dare say, familiar to most of my readers—viz. four hot glaring walls, at the bases of which runs a bed of dry pebbly mould in which nothing ever grows, a few paths at right angles to each other, composed of loose shifting gravel which will never bind, and in the centre three or four apple trees, which seldom, if ever, bear any fruit. In attendance upon the eight olive trees, which attract the traveller's attention by their ancient and desolate appearance, is a Franciscan monk, who spends his time in watering the rose trees which cling to their gnarled trunks, and in receiving the few piastres which of course you put into his outstretched hand as he ushers you out of Gethsemane.

A short and not very precipitous climb brings you to the summit of the Mount of Olives, whence you have by far the most imposing and complete view of Jerusalem.

Surrounded by a chain of mountains, the Holy City rises proudly up from amongst them. All traces of its decay and desolation are lost in distance. Its mass of houses with their countless domes, and the numerous minarets and towers which are seen spiring up in all directions, give it a truly picturesque appearance.

Immediately below us, occupying the site of the Temple, lay the Haram-el-Shereef, with its charming gardens and melancholy cypresses; and, in the centre, the magnificent Mosque of Omar, its emerald walls resplendent with a flood of sunlight. More distant, rose the mighty cupola and domes of the Sepulchre Church and the massive tower of Hippicus; while, to the left, we could see David's tower on Zion, and, near to it, the Armenian Church of St. James, and the glistening turrets of the New Protestant Church. To the north, in a wide circle, we could discern the mountains of Ephraim, with Ebal and Gerizim—the mounts whence blessing and cursing were proclaimed; while all the country to the south was occupied by the hills of Judah. Nor is the eastern view less beautiful, though totally devoid of life. Over a confused mass of barren mountain peaks our eyes wandered, far away over the Desert of Quarantana*, to the intensely blue waters of the Dead Sea; above which, to the east, towered massively, like some huge wall, the mountains of Moab—whence Moses, upon Nebo, directed his gaze over the Promised Land. The plains of Jericho, through which flows the Jordan—its course

* In this Desert our Saviour is said to have spent the period of His temptation.

to the Dead Sea marked by a long line of foliage, which fringes its banks on either side—were seen in all their extent to the left.

By the time we reached our hotel we had visited, if Giuseppe was to be believed, pretty nearly all the places, with the exception of those beneath the roof of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, mentioned in the New Testament. It almost seemed as if, in the grouping of them so closely together, the convenience of succeeding generations had been studied; for instance, pausing in one part of the Via Dolorosa, our guide, clearing his throat, said, “ You see this building, Sir? This was the palace of Herod! This is where St. Peter made his denial!—that (pointing with his finger to a spot a few yards in advance) is where the cock crew!—this house belonged to Santa Veronica, who offered the napkin—now shown at Rome on Good Fridays—to our Lord as he passed on his way to Calvary!—and just there, Sir, is where Simon the Cyrenian was compelled to bear the cross!”

A few steps farther on he drew our attention to two very antiquated buildings, and astonished us by asserting that the one to the left belonged to Lazarus, whilst the other, on which still remained traces of red paint, had been the residence of Dives;

and, for the first time in our lives, we perceived that the beggar had been equally well lodged with his wealthy neighbour. He was not at all perplexed by the fact of these two characters having been introduced in a parable, nor when we told him that Lazarus was only spoken of as lying at the rich man's gate. The former difficulty he overcame by saying that our Lord, whilst uttering the parable, had stood in this spot, taking the two houses in question as examples; and, as to the latter objection, he was inclined to doubt that two mere travellers could be better informed than one who had been born and bred on the spot!

Whatever laudable plans the generality of travellers may have sketched out in their own minds as to the disposal of their time whilst in Jerusalem, and whilst they are still under the influence of those feelings of holy romance which take possession of all on their first entry into Palestine—once in the Holy City, they find themselves plunged, *nolens volens*, into the regular routine of sight-seeing, and are hurried along with the stream. First day, Via Dolorosa and the Mount of Olives; second day, Church of the Sepulchre and Mosque of Omar; third day, a ride round the exterior of the City; and so on till their guide informs them that they have finished Jeru-

salem, and must now give way to the newly-arrived batch of travellers, whose tinkling mules are crowding close to the steps of Mr. Hauser's hotel, and who may be heard engaging the rooms you are expected to vacate on the morrow.

The same Americans who had treated us so gloriously at El-Arish, boasted to me, on a subsequent occasion, that they had "done" Jerusalem in three days; a feat which they had accomplished by rising each morning before sunrise, and working hard all day. But in them perhaps it was excusable, as their intention was to "get along" through Italy and Greece, and be back in New York before the moons of another two months had waxed and waned.

The moment we were enabled to dispense with the services of our guide we did so; and managing to keep the landlord in a good humour with us, we spent a few days in real enjoyment, rambling leisurely in the environs of the city. But the feverish state of excitement in which we had *lionized* during the first two or three days had brushed all the bloom from our visit; nor could we afterwards find it possible to realise any of that enthusiasm with which we had hoped to have been filled whilst Jerusalem was yet in the future.

From the street in which the hotel is situated,

a short passage, for foot passengers only, lined on either side with the shops of dealers in relics and antiquities, conducts the traveller into a species of piazza or paved square.

During the Jerusalem season, or, in other words, during that period immediately preceding and subsequent to the celebration of the Greek Easter, this square, one side of which is entirely occupied by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, is the focus of all the noise and bustle of the city.

The pavement is so covered with the wares of the numerous vendors of all manner of holy curiosities, that, in order to cross from one side to the other, the traveller is obliged, for every three direct steps in advance, to make two either to the right or left and sometimes backwards. Large heaps of rosaries oppose him in every direction. Beads from Mecca, shells from Bethlehem, and chaplets of amber are thrust in his face at every step. Pilgrims of all kinds and in every variety of costume, from the high-crowned conical hat of the Persian dervish, and the white burnoose of the swarthy Bedouin, to the unpretending paletôt and broad wide-awake of the sandy-haired German, are to be heard descanting in loud tones upon the approaching Easter. Knots of Turkish soldiers pretend to preserve order

by bullying all around them. The atmosphere is hot and heavy with the clouds of incense which escape all day from the open doors or windows of the Church; whilst, above all the din and noise outside, can be heard the roll of the organ, accompanying the chanting of the priests as they engage in the continual round of services within. Such is the daily character of the scene in the court-yard before the doors of the Holy Sepulchre Church at Easter!

Except that he escapes for a time from the sun's glare, the traveller finds, on entering the church, that he has only left one scene of crowded excitement for another. Here are no idle loiterers, all have some object in view; and without any warning of "by your leave," he is pushed here and there and everywhere, with immense difficulty making his way from one part of the sacred edifice to another. Wherever he turns his eyes he sees enthusiastic Hadjis kneeling, bowing, kissing, and lighting tapers. Action of some kind is the order of the day with all save himself.

Carried along with the crush, he enters the small marble chapel erected beneath the great dome of the church over our Lord's Sepulchre. As there is only room for three or four at a time, and as no one makes even a show of giving way to another,

the reader may well imagine the difficulty with which he squeezes himself in for just one glance at the sacred tomb.

Leaving the circular church, he then passes into the large chapel allotted to the Greeks, by far the most splendid and most gorgeously decorated of any within the precincts of the whole building. In the centre of this chapel he will most probably observe, as I did, a crowd of pilgrims collected round an object affording them intense interest; and on edging his way through them, he will find them engaged in bending the knee to and kissing the half of a globe raised above the marble pavement. Round this semi-spherical substance is drawn a black line with a spot over the centre; and if he ask the meaning of it, he will be told that it marks the exact centre of the world, and as such is reverenced accordingly.

Not likely to betray his ignorance by hinting at the possibility of any other spot being situated over the centre of a world which he has ever been taught to consider as round, he will say nothing, but gaze mysteriously upon the object in question, as if for the first, and perhaps the last, time in his life he was standing immediately over the exact centre of the world!

After paying visits to all the most interesting

points of the church, and wandering for a time among the numerous arched corridors and vaulted chambers which lead on all sides from beneath the great dome, and where, during the Easter solemnities, many pilgrims are lodged, he will find himself in the chapel devoted to the Latins, which, hardly rejoicing in a fair amount of daylight, possesses an air of solemn grandeur. The centre of attraction in this chapel is situated behind an iron grating, between the bars of which he will perceive, when his eyes have accustomed themselves to the gloom, a portion of a column. To this column his guide will inform him our Lord was bound when He was scourged. For a moment he will wonder how any pilgrim is enabled to pay a further adoration than by gazing at it, as he has already done himself, through the grating; another brief moment of patience, however, solves the difficulty. A Hadji approaches, and taking up a pole from a neighbouring corner, he thrusts it between the bars till it touches the sacred column, then drawing it out, he presses the extremity to his lips and retires.

At last the traveller enquires the way to Calvary, and being prepared, from the accounts of other travellers, to find it somewhere on the first floor, is not so startled as he might be by being told, "the

first turning to the right, upstairs." Following in the stream of pilgrims, he ascends a short flight of stone steps, and partly bewildered by the dense crowd of worshippers collected into so small a space, the clouds of incense, the chaunting of the priests engaged in the service, and the blaze of light produced from innumerable gigantic candles, and perfect showers of golden lamps, he makes fruitless attempts to realise the fact of his standing on the summit of that mountain where, eighteen hundred years ago, a very different crowd had assembled to gaze—some in grief, but almost all in ridicule and triumph—upon the suffering Saviour as He hung here upon the cross between the two thieves.

Above perhaps the most gorgeously furnished altar that he has yet seen, and half hidden by lamps and candles, is a cross to which is nailed a life-size image of the Saviour, resplendent with jewels, numerous gold and silver ornaments, and hung about with flowers. Beneath this altar he is shown the three holes made by the crosses, the centre one being cased with gold. To the right, on the removal of a metal plate, he will see, if he kneel down, the natural rock beneath the flooring, a deep fissure in which is said to be the result of the earthquake which followed the expiration of our Lord.

I have no wish to make disparaging reflections upon the Holy Sepulchre Church, so as to lead my reader to the conclusion that I regretted my visit, for so novel and exciting a scene did I consider it, that I often repeated it without ever failing to reap a great deal of amusement — much as I lament that its atmosphere was only calculated to amuse a passing hour. That it was no fault of mine I am quite convinced, for no one could have ascended to Calvary, or pushed aside the crimson curtain which veils the entrance to the Holy Sepulchre, with more sincere intentions of realising the sanctity of the spot.

Squeezing myself wherever I turned with an amount of labour far from pleasant, I seemed to become callous to all holy associations, and found myself devoting my whole attention to the general architecture of the building, and the curiously attired crowd which thronged me, instead of to the objects for the glorification of which all these highly decorated chapels and splendid altars were intended, and for the adoration of which so many thousands were then filling the streets of Jerusalem.

So captivating is the appearance which the far-famed Mosque of Omar presents to any one standing

on the summit of Mount Olivet, that the traveller seldom rests content until he has seen it from a nearer point. As it is entirely enclosed with the houses of scrupulous Mussulmen, this little fancy of the traveller would seem at first sight to be fraught with such difficulty as to be almost out of the question; so that he is not a little pleased, on reaching his hotel, to find that a very moderate bucksheesh will procure him an order to ascend to the roof of the Turkish Governor's house, whence a most complete view is had of the site of the old Temple, now occupied by the Mosque, and which, after Mecca, ranks as the next most holy place in the Moslem mind.

In the centre of an extensive area, lawned from end to end with soft green turf, its surface diversified with groups of acacias and melancholy cypresses, rises the magnificent Mosque of Omar. It is situated on a daïs of white marble, raised a few steps above the turf: its form is octagon, and, being built or overlaid with some green substance, presents a very gorgeous appearance, as the sun strikes on its polished surface. Surrounding it, on the outer edge of the raised daïs, are numerous colonnades of white marble and several mausoleums, the small white

domes of which are built of the same material, and sparkle in the sun.

Our visit to the Haram was made a little after noon ; and, beneath the shade of the acacias, obedient to the chant of the muezzin to mid-day prayer, were collected many devout Mussulmen, engaged in prostrating themselves with their faces to the earth, towards the sacred building in the centre.

As all entrance to the Mosque of Omar is denied to the Christian, and as it is even said that instant death is the reward of the man who shall dare to violate its sacred precincts, the Haram-el-Shereef is invested in the Giaour's mind with a mystery so profound, that as he stands on the roof of the Governor's house, gazing down upon its charming gardens, its porticos, and fountains of glistening marble, he is seized with a longing, like the man who stands on the brink of a precipice, to precipitate himself headlong, let what will be the result.

History tells only of four Franks who have had the boldness to fathom its mysteries — *viz.*, Mr. Richardson, in 1818, and Messrs. Bonomi, Catherwood, and Arundale, in 1838, who, by some extraordinary combination of circumstances, managed, not only to gain access to the gardens and mosque itself,

but even to make most minute drawings of all the interior arrangements.*

On the Western exterior of the Haram-el-Shereef is situated the spot where the remnant of the ancient rulers of Jerusalem have purchased the right of lamenting and wailing over the downfall of their nation, and the departed glory of their beloved Temple. The approach to it is through the Jews' quarter, and, as usual, the dirtiest part of the city. However, the labyrinth of narrow and squalid lanes which are passed on the way here terminates in an open space, beneath what is supposed to be a portion of the old Temple wall. The lower part of it is composed of very large bevelled stones, against which numbers of Jews in their fur caps, with open copies of the Talmud, from which they keep repeating passages, lean their foreheads in the deepest dejection. Ranged along the opposite wall, seated on the ground, the most part with their faces buried in their hands, are the women, who, what time that

* Since my visit to Jerusalem and the dispute about the Holy Places, I am told that the Mussulman world has been forced to abandon many of its scruples about Christians entering the mosques, and that the Haram-el-Shereef is no longer looked upon as the grave of any Frank who shall penetrate its mysteries.

they are not peering between their fingers at the traveller, appear to be engaged in prayer, at times sending forth a dismal groan. Numbers of other men are to be seen walking up and down, reciting in a loud tone passages from the Talmud, and, frequently stopping, sway their bodies to and fro, while gazing with sorrowful countenances towards the site of the Temple ; then, suddenly stepping forwards, they spread the palms of their hands upon the wall, and kiss, with tears in their eyes, the great bevelled stones. Altogether it is the most affecting, and, I thoroughly believe, the most genuine expression of grief.

The evening of the day on which I visited the Jews' place of wailing was so exquisitely bright and balmy, that, though the rapidly declining sun was already warning all the inhabitants of the city to collect within its walls before the closing of the gates, I could not resist the temptation of a short stroll into the country ; so, climbing upon the massive old grey walls, which look down on the side into the valley of Hinnom, I walked along them till I came to the Zion Gate.

At this gate are collected the lepers, about fifty in number, who always remain here to implore the charity of all persons entering or leaving the city.

They are quite distinct from the rest of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who look upon them, as of old, as unclean; and being thus forced to intermarry with themselves, they perpetuate the disease. The moment I came in sight, about half a dozen ran forward to ask alms, displaying as they did so their fingerless hands and stunted proportions to excite my pity.

Passing through the gate, I followed the road which runs for a few hundred yards on the left beneath the city walls, and then winds down the mountain side, past the Pool of Siloam. Arrived at the fountain of Enrogel, I lay down upon the turf in the shade of the small dome which covers the well.

Hidden by the intervening hills, the sharp angle of the temple wall on the summit of Moriah is all that is here to be seen of Jerusalem ; whilst immediately to my right, hanging on to the bare rock, was the wild village of Siloam — a strange mixture of mud huts, tombs converted into dwellings, and black canvass tents.

Numbers of fierce-eyed Bedouins, with long guns slung across their shoulders, groups of savage unveiled women, and swarms of naked children of both sexes, playing with hungry wolf-like dogs, and firing

off sharp volleys of bucksheesh cries the moment a traveller is seen, offered me no inducement to look more closely at Siloam.

In all my walks about Jerusalem, I found no spot so pretty as Enrogel. Surrounded with foliage and cornfields, one forgets the sterility and desolation by which, on all other sides, the Holy City is characterized; and often, during my sojourn of three weeks here, I whiled away many a pleasant hour with my sketch-book and pencil, listening to the soporific dripping of the water from the moist sides of the well. And it is these quiet solitudes, more than all the churches and altars which are erected over the most sacred spots, and with which the city itself teems, that form the great charm to the traveller, who really visits Jerusalem with a view of bringing home to his mind the deeply-interesting fact of being where our Saviour spent the greater part of his life. However careless a man may be of that which concerns his soul, when he leaves the noise and bustle of the city, and descends to Enrogel, or climbs the side of the Mount of Olives, or wanders forth on the road to Bethany, with the same scene before him upon which our Saviour must so often have gazed, it is impossible but that such moments as these must have their effect upon him, and make

him think seriously, whether he be a believer in Christianity or not.

Continuing my walk, I left Enrogel, and climbed to the summit of the so-called Mount of the Prophets; and, gaining from thence the Mount of Olives, I once more looked upon the Holy City as the sun was commencing to set, gilding with its rays the multitude of mosques and minarets which tapered up into the evening sky within its walls.

CHAP. XXIV.

MAR-SABA.

WE were hanging one morning out of the hotel window, gazing on the crowded street beneath, and consoling ourselves with the notion that we had killed, not only all the lions of the city itself, but all those of any notability within the twelve-mile circuit, when the voice of Mohammad conversing with the landlord stole upon the silence of the *salle-à-manger*: — “Oui, c'est justement ça ! Nous allons partir tout de suite pour le Mer Mort; nous nous ferons passer par Jéricho et le Couvent de Mar-Saba ! une affaire de trois jours — pas plus !”

Drawing our heads into the room, we turned to our dragoman to know who was on the point of starting for the Dead Sea, Jericho, &c.; and learning that he was alluding to ourselves, we felt the mercury of our spirits rise several degrees, at the thought of quitting the white glaring walls and hot streets of the city, and again taking the field, even for the purpose of killing more game.

That evening we had an interview with the

sheikh through whose territory we were to pass — a magnificent specimen, as far as height, breadth of chest, and a handsome face go, of what a man ought to be. On the payment of a very considerable number of piastres, he gave us a species of passport, by the possession and exhibition of which we were to travel unmolested through his dominions.

Having sent on our tents and baggage-mules at sunrise the next morning, with a part of the sheikh's escort of soldiers, we mounted our horses about eight o'clock, A.M., and followed in their steps with the three remaining Bedouins. Surmounting a spur of the Mount of Olives, and leaving the little village of Bethany on our left, we soon after entered the scorching wastes of the Desert of Quarantana, among the deep ravines of which we went slowly riding till past noon.

When we had almost completed our descent from the high land about Jerusalem into the plains of Jericho, the sheikh of our escort turned to us, and, with many salaams, invited us to send our baggage-mules to Jericho — (not in the sense in which we in England often invite creatures and things which are obnoxious to us to betake themselves) — and to go ourselves and dragoman to his encampment, which

he said was not far off, there to refresh ourselves, and afterwards to proceed on our journey. As we were anxious to see something of Bedouin life among the mountains, we accepted his invitation; and, turning to the left out of the road, and following him, we came in about half an hour in sight of the camp. A dozen large savage dogs, showing every tooth in their heads, came "tumbling over their own growls" to welcome us. The noise they made roused the whole tribe, and numbers of men, snatching up their guns, ran together from all quarters towards us: the instant, however, that they saw us in the company of their sheikh, their fierce countenances became radiant with smiles, and, beating the dogs back, each one strove to outdo the other in helping us to dismount, and in many other little ways "doing the civil."

Our horses having been led away, we were conducted by the sheikh to his own tent in the centre of the camp: and all their best carpets having been rolled up into a divan, we seated ourselves thereon; and, whilst food was being prepared for us in another tent, we remained undeserving objects of the most intense admiration, or perhaps I ought to use the word *curiosity*. A few of the principal men, and the sheikh's little son—a child of four

years old — were the only ones that were privileged to sit in the tent with us, whilst the rest of the tribe formed such a dense crowd round the door as totally to exclude the daylight. The men, with hardly an exception, were all fine handsome fellows, but I cannot say as much for the women.

The sheikh's child afforded us much amusement, being about the most peevish, worst tempered specimen of humanity in miniature that I ever had the misfortune of being in contact with. He seemed to prefer *squalling* to *speaking*; but for this fancy he really had more excuse than most children, being so loaded with chains, and coins, and ornaments of all kinds, which made such a jingle whenever he moyed, that perhaps he found himself incapable of hearing his own voice, unless he uttered it in any tone short of a scream.

As all the men and women vied with one another in currying favour with their chief, they resorted to the expedient of cramming the unfortunate infant with anything eatable they could lay their hands on; the result of this was, that the child was so fat that he could hardly open his eyes, and, carrying more flesh than his small bones were capable of sustaining, he rolled and tumbled about, much in the manner I could fancy any small statue would,

which had been carved out of a huge jelly fish, instead of a block of marble. *

The better to preserve our composure, with so many curious eyes all round and about us, we requested to be provided with pipes ; and then lying back on the divan, we conversed at our leisure, by means of Mohammad, with the sheikh, Aboo Sea, as he called himself, and his chief men. In due time the refreshment which had been promised was “dished up”—or rather “pitched down”—consisting of a great heap of white dough pancakes, to which were presently added two earthen bowls, one containing oil and the other butter, mashed up with a quantity of powdered sugar. Being a little uncertain whether we were to make our repast off the oil and butter, merely using the bread pancakes as an accompaniment, or *vice versâ*, or to divide our attentions equally between each, we requested the sheikh to lead off. This he did by first baring his right arm, and then, breaking off a large morsel of bread, he dipped it in the oil, and after rubbing it about in the butter and sugar, he threw his head back and dropped it into his open mouth ; afterwards he sucked his fingers with immense relish, and motioned us to do likewise. Tucking up the sleeves on our right arms, we imitated his manœuvre

exactly—though the sucking of the fingers was not performed with such apparent relish: then all the other men followed our example, till the sheikh's turn came again, when he led off the second round. By degrees, from first thinking the mixture actually nauseous, we came at last positively to like it, and we began to watch that every one "ate fair." When the heap of dough was consumed, all but a few fragments, and the oil and the butter dishes were emptied, except what adhered to the sides, the women were told they might have the rest; nor did they seem at all annoyed that they had not been invited to partake of the meal before. Coffee and pipes followed; and when the sun began to sink towards the west, we re-mounted our horses, and, bidding adieu to our Bedouin friends, we rode on under the guidance of the sheikh to Jericho, where we arrived a little before sunset, finding the tents pitched, camp fires lighted, and every preparation being made for our dinner.

Of the city of Jericho nought now remains to tell even of the ground which it covered, though the spot where we pitched our tents is universally believed to be its site, about three miles to the west of the Jordan, and the same distance to the north of the Dead Sea.

Withdrawing to a short distance from the camp, we stretched ourselves beneath an acacia. The night was intensely clear; and, as we gazed up among the myriads of stars above us, we could not help feeling what a much more overwhelming notion of infinite space (if it is possible to use such an adjective in connection with a word which necessarily implies something *finite*) one forms here in the East than in England. An eastern night sky is so much more pure and black, and the stars so much brighter, that, even with the naked eye, one is able to single out each separate heavenly body, thus bringing home to the mind so much more vividly the fact of their hanging in space, and to detect that, though some are to all appearance smaller than others, it is because they are so much farther away.

A burst of merriment from the tents made us suddenly leave thinking of the stars, and turn our attention to whence it proceeded. Our Bedouin attendants, assisted by the *moukris*, or muleteers, having heaped together an immense pile of dry wood in the centre of the camp, had just set fire to it, and, fanned by the gentlest of night breezes, the flames went leaping up high above the tents. As

they seemed about to amuse themselves in some way or another, we drew near to watch.

Holding each other's hands, and forming a ring, they commenced dancing and singing round the fire. Getting more boisterous, they at length broke away from each other, and danced off in different directions, always converging again after a few seconds within the glow of the flames. When tired with this figure, they all formed in line, arm linked in arm, and one of them acting as leader stood in front. Producing mysterious noises in their throats, intended I believe to mimic hyænas or jackals, or perhaps lions or tigers (but I am not sure which, as I did not enquire), they commenced to sway their bodies from right to left; then, following the motions of their leader, they shook off their capotes; then they tore off their head-dresses, allowing the long horse-tails of hair on the tops of their heads to stream over their shoulders. At one period of the dance they all drew their swords, which flashed for an instant in the fire-light, as they struck them simultaneously into the earth; then, stripping till they were almost entirely naked, they went dancing in and out among the half-buried blades, clapping their hands above their heads, and singing, or rather yelling, at the tops of their voices.

As the fires burned low, their dancing energies flagged, and they were soon all sleeping, wrapped in their capotes, around the fast-expiring embers. We also retired to our tent; and, whilst our Arab attendants lay snoring at the door, and Mohammad talked in an under-tone in Italian to Halifa, the cook, as they washed up the tea-things together, I employed myself in writing the daily quantum of my journal, with particulars of our visit to the Bedouins, and the dance round the camp-fires at Jericho.

After watching the mules with our camp effects start across the plain towards the Dead Sea, on their way to the Convent of Mar-Saba, whither they were taking a request from us to the brethren to prepare supper and a night's lodging against our arrival at sunset, we mounted our horses, and, accompanied by Mohammad and our Bedouin guard, rode on to the Jordan.

Arrived at the river, we were charmed with the excessive beauty of the spot, supposed to be the same where the Israelites crossed under Joshua. Not more than thirty yards in width, the Jordan here rushes round a bend with fearful velocity towards the Dead Sea. The numerous large trees which grow on either side, stretching their branches

far over its muddy waters, scarcely allow of any sunshine except just in the middle of the stream. Shrubs of all kinds, and of almost tropical luxuriance, rise high above the tangled underwood; whilst beneath the shade of acacias, mixed with rhododendron, oleander, and all the most showy of Syrian flowers, are seen fox-gloves, wild hyacinths, and blue hare-bells in the greatest profusion. It is here that the pilgrims bathe during the Easter festivals, and which ceremony we might have been witnesses of, had we chosen to delay our visit by a few days; but as we reclined upon the shelving bank with our chibouques, enjoying the warm morning air, not yet heated by the mid-day sun, and the most perfect silence, enhanced, rather than broken, by the gurgling of the river, as it rushed along under the trees close at our feet, we came to a conclusion — perhaps it was an erroneous one, yet nevertheless we did come to a conclusion — that it was better thus to visit the Jordan, than when those solitudes, in which we now luxuriated, were violated by a collection of four thousand frantically-religious pilgrims of both sexes, some half naked, but the most part entirely so, engaged in dipping themselves and families in its waters.

Remounting our horses, we turned their heads towards the Dead Sea, and, leaving the foliage and wild hyacinths behind us, we struck across the desert plain, arriving at the Great Salt Lake, or, as it is called by the Arabs, "Bahr-el-Lout," *i. e.* Sea of Lot, in about two hours' gentle riding.

All the accounts that I had ever read of the Dead Sea describe it, and the surrounding neighbourhood, as one of the most dismal, sepulchral localities that it is possible to imagine. This may possibly be the case during the time of the kampseen, when the sky is overcast with clouds, and when the sulphureous vapours arise from its waters in such heavy masses as to shroud from view the fine mountains which tower up on either side; but, whatever appearance it may present on such occasions,—and they must be few and far between, as it is seldom that a bright unclouded sun does not shine upon its blue waters—it was not so to-day. As I stood upon the shingle, gazing over an expanse of water, so intensely blue that I could fancy the deepest nook in the Mediterranean, beneath the brightest of June suns, would have seemed green compared with it, the huge Moabite mountains rising abruptly from its azure depths on one side, and the high land above Mar-Saba convulsed into a hundred fantastic shapes on

the other, the whole coloured with all the various tints that one ever sees in the changing face of nature between sunrise and sunset,—I thought I had never looked upon any picture deserving of such enthusiastic admiration as the Dead Sea and its surrounding scenery. It is true that all is so scorched and barren, that not a leaf or blade of grass is here to give relief to the eye; yet the blue surface of the lake itself, and the rich colouring in which the whole country round is steeped, is quite sufficient to atone for this: and I went away carrying with me reminiscences of a picture possessed of such peculiar beauty, that I might wander where I would over the wide world, and not meet with any spot which I could compare with it.

Anxious to test the accounts of travellers touching the buoyancy of its waters, I disrobed myself, and, plunging in, was soon engaged in springing rather than swimming over its blue wavelets. At each stroke that I made, my head, arms, and entire shoulders, down nearly to my waist, rose above the surface; nor was I able to keep my feet, whilst in motion, under water, so that my progress was rendered slow in the extreme. I even found that, without taking the trouble to turn on my back, if I merely desisted from striking out, I remained

motionless on the surface, my head and shoulders well above water; whilst, on turning to look for my feet, I found that they also were unable to remain below, and were sticking up behind. So long as I remained in the water, I found it most cool and refreshing; though immediately on gaining the land, it seemed as if I had emerged from an oil-tub; and, on attempting to dry myself with a towel, I was obliged, after a most violent rubbing, to give it up in despair, and to put on my clothes, notwithstanding the clammy moisture which oozed from every pore, and which I found impossible to rectify by rubbing. This unpleasant dampness lasted for two or three days, in fact, until I was able to bathe in fresh water on my return to Jerusalem. To the taste, the Dead Sea water is nauseous in the extreme, most intensely bitter as well as salt, and burns into the skin like vinegar. Returning to our horses, we rode along the shingle, which was thickly strewn with lumps of bitumen, for some time; and then, striking to the right, among the limestone rocks, we pushed on, in order to reach the Convent of Mar-Saba before sunset. A most romantic ride of three hours brought us in sight of the two stone towers which guard the entrance to the convent on the western wall, and, soon after, we were knocking at

the gates for admittance. On entering we found our mules already arrived and collected in a small court-yard on a level with the two stone towers, but at some height above the principal part of the convent.

The Convent of Mar-Saba is Greek, and is one of the most curious in the whole of Syria, being strongly fortified, to resist the attacks of Bedouins, and is built hanging to one side of a deep and most precipitous ravine. From the entrance-gate down to the chapel, whence you may look over the parapet directly down into the dark glen below, we descended from ledge to ledge by means of stone staircases. Arrived at the lowest ledge, over against the chapel, we were conducted, by the brother who presides over the refectory, to the strangers' room—an extremely comfortable one, nicely carpeted, with a most luxurious divan, raised about three inches from the ground, running entirely round it, and a low deal table in the centre. It was lighted by two good-sized windows, commanding a view of the entire convent, which rose up immediately in front—a mingled mass of stone walls, small red-tiled houses, buttresses, and staircases, to the height of about 150 feet.

Considering it was Lent with the Greek Church,

we were provided with a most plenteous meal of rice and fowls, and then mounting to the flat roof of our room with our chibouques and coffee, we sat till a late hour, gazing with delight upon the romantic position of the old convent in the moonlight; and when at last we threw ourselves on our divans to sleep, it was to be awoke at intervals by the chapel-bell tolling the hour of the night.

With the first streak of daylight we were astir: but before leaving the convent, and whilst the mules were being packed at the gates, we were shown over it by one of the lay brothers. As we walked from one point of interest to another, he told us the convent was founded 1200 years ago by San Saba, a Greek monk, and that it had passed through more miseries and vicissitudes than perhaps any other establishment of the kind in the world; that when Syria was invaded by the Persians, all the monks were massacred to a man, in proof of which he not only sold me, for the sum of a few piastres, a gigantic sort of pocket-handkerchief, upon which were depicted in the minutest detail all the horrors of the massacre, but he also took us to a cave, and, bidding us look through the grating which barred the entrance, we shuddered at the sight of human skulls,

to the number of 14,000, heaped together, a terrible memento of that day of slaughter. But I suppose this large number included not only those of the monks, but also of the hermits, with whom this valley teemed in time of yore; and very likely, as we may conclude that the good monks made a certain amount of savage resistance, many of the Persians themselves.

The chapel, like all Greek places of worship, was gorgeous to a degree, every square inch of wall being loaded with either painting or gilded ornament of some kind. Bidding adieu to the monks, we mounted from ledge to ledge by means of the stone staircases to the summit of the convent, on a level with the entrance gates, where we found our horses waiting for us, the mules having gone on before to Bethlehem.

Three hours' riding from Mar-Saba brought us within sight of the latter place, situated on the top of a hill, the citadel-like Convent of our Lady forming the principal feature of the town. The Bethlehemites are an industrious class, and all the country round is brought by them into a high state of cultivation. As we approached the town, we passed through very extensive vineyards, a most pleasing contrast to the desolation we had left

behind us at the Dead Sea. From time immemorial have the women of Bethlehem been famous above all the fair of Syria for their beauty ; and seldom does any traveller return to England, careless though he may have been of the elegant grouping of minarets and palm trees, the effect of Moorish arcades, or sunset tints, without a few words in praise of the maids of Bethlchem. Long before he has seen their Madonna-like faces, his heart has warmed towards them from the mere fact of their being all Christians ; and now as he stands watching them crowding from all sides, bareheaded, towards the church doors, obedient to the convent bell, green turbans, mueddin cries, prostrations five times a-day, and aught that savours of Mahomet, are for a time forgotten.

As we intended remaining here for the day, and it was yet quite early, my friend and I rode round the town with Mohammad, in order to select some pretty spot where to pitch our tents. We at length decided upon a small field at some distance from any houses, in which were a number of olive trees, whence we had a most delightful prospect. Sitting in our tent doors, we looked upon Bethlehem rising in the immediate fore-ground, the hill-side clothed with vineyards and fresh green corn-fields, the red

cliffs about Mar-Saba, the huge Moabite mountains, and all the country beyond Jordan.

Having settled ourselves in our new quarters, we repaired with Mohammad to the convent. Built on the brow of the hill at the further side of the town from our encampment, it seemed really to require the massive buttresses by which it is flanked, to prevent it from falling over into the plain beneath. It is strongly fortified, the only entrance being through a small iron door deeply set in a wall of immense thickness. After partaking of some lunch in the refectory, we found our way into the chapel, where mass was being performed; and one of the monks volunteering to show us all that would be likely to interest us, we followed him with lighted candles down a flight of stone steps, leading subterraneously from one corner of the building. Threading our way along a succession of galleries, and past many small shrines cut in the rock, we at length arrived at the Chapel of the Nativity, a small chamber divided into two compartments, separated from each other by a few steps. The natural rock, out of which these two chapels are hewn, though for the most part covered with tapestry, showed itself in some places. From the ceiling pended an almost innumerable quantity of lamps, but as only

a few immediately over the altar were lighted, it brought out the small shrine, which glittered with ornaments and offerings of all kinds, into strong relief against the surrounding gloom. Our attendant friar, first devoutly kneeling and crossing himself, kissed a spot beneath the altar, which was explained to us when he rose, by the words engraved on a small plate of gold encircling it, “*Hic de Virgine, Jesus Christus natus est.*”

The second and lower compartment of the cave, into which we descended by means of the few steps before alluded to, is much smaller than the first—in fact, is more like a deep recess. On one side we were shown the manger where our Lord was laid, and which, though it is said to retain its original form, is now overlaid with white marble: opposite to it, a small gold star, set in the pavement, marks the spot where the Magi knelt to offer their gifts to the infant Saviour.

Though I did not doubt but that the cave in which I stood really afforded shelter to the blessed Virgin—for it is still a common practice among the Easterns to lodge their animals in subterraneous stables—yet I found it very hard to realise the peculiar sanctity of the spot; all that I saw was so utterly at variance with the notion I had formed of Beth-

lchem, and the stable attached to the inn, "where the young child was," and over which the star rested.

After leaving the convent, we returned to our encampment, and mounting our horses we rode along the road towards Hebron, in order to visit the famous pools of Solomon. An hour's ride over a very rough road brought us to them: they are three in number, below the level of the high road from Jerusalem to Hebron; and even for the present day would, I suppose, be considered most stupendous works. There is more or less water in all three, though the one furthest from the road contains the most. They were built as reservoirs to supply Jerusalem with water, and which function they perform to the present day by means of a cistern or aqueduct extending all the way to the city by way of Bethlehem.

We returned by a different and far prettier road through some densely wooded valleys—and reached our tents as a nearly full moon was commencing to throw a flood of light over the birthplace of our Lord.

It was late before we sought our couches. The moon was so bright and clear, and the night so perfectly soft and silent, that we were most unwilling

to retire to our tents ; sitting hour after hour on the brow of the hill where we had pitched our camp, sheltered by an olive-tree, which had grown in the uncertain moonlight into twice its actual size, we gazed upon Bethlehem and the massive old convent, which, supported by its heavy buttresses, stood boldly forward into the scene around us, high above the plain, and made doubly prominent by the broad belt of white mist, which, rising in thick volumes from the Dead Sea, shrouded all the country beyond.

A couple of hours' gentle riding the next morning brought us back, by way of Rachel's tomb and the Convent of Mâr-Elyâs, to our old quarters in Jerusalem.

CHAP. XXV.

LAST DAYS IN JERUSALEM.

EVERY one who wanders to any distance from England, whether a proficient in the art of drawing or a perfect ignoramus as to its very rudiments, seems to consider it his duty to carry with him a great box full of black lead pencils, a twelve month's supply of india rubber, and such reams of drawing paper as would enable him to make a panorama of his whole tour. Being thus amply stocked with all the necessary implements, if he does not actually produce anything worthy the great dome of the Colosseum in Regent's Park, or capable of superseding Albert Smith's series of pictures at the Egyptian Hall — still he generally manages, by dint of severe labour and utter disregard of noon-day suns, to present his friends, on his return to England, with an innumerable quantity of odds and ends, and half-finished sketches of nearly all the people, places, and buildings it has been his lot to set eyes on. However poor a draughtsman he may be, no object presents a sufficient amount of difficulties to deter him from

attempting to place its likeness on his drawing-board. If he has been up the Nile and remained for some time in Cairo, the chances are that, by the time he reaches Palestine, he will have become disgusted with his multitudinous abortive efforts, and will have consigned his paper, pencils, and india rubber to the lowest depths of his portmanteau, refraining from scattering the result of all his labours to the winds only in the hope that they will eventually become the property and pride of some kind and considerate sister. Jerusalem, from the summit of the Mount of Olives, is generally his last sketch. For some time past he has been tottering on the verge of the idea that he was not born for an artist, when the two long hours that he spends beneath a white cotton umbrella, struggling in vain to make a correct note of its long, irregular lines of castellated wall, enclosing countless white-domed houses and clustering minarets, completely kick him off that stage upon which he has been so long endeavouring to sustain a part.

If I thought it likely that any of my readers would doubt the truth of this statement, I would give the names and addresses of several of my travelling companions in a note at the bottom of the page to whom they might refer; but I am in hopes they

I will be content with my own experiences on the subject, which resulted in my being quite tired with putting in, and rubbing out, and commencing again, and, lastly, in tearing up each individual attempt, restoring my drawing materials to the pocket of my shooting coat, and a walk back into that city which was so averse to having its portrait taken. The day on which I ceased to fancy myself an artist was a great fête with the Mussulmen, and swarms of pilgrims, in holiday attire, were joyously engaged in forming processions on the sunny slopes of Mount Moriah and in the valley beneath, to go to Neby Moussa, the mountain of Moses; and what with the shouting of the men, the lengthening ziraleet of the women, the waving of banners, and the firing of many guns, which floated continuously up from the crowds assembled like a moving rainbow on the hill, the whole atmosphere around and above them was filled with noise and gaiety.

Our sojourn at Jerusalem was now drawing to a close, and what little time was left us was devoted to purchasing horses and in numberless other preparations for a month's ride through Syria; though, as luck would have it, we managed to find a few minutes for very nearly getting into a scrape.

Wandering we did not know exactly whither, but

somewhere in the vicinity of the Mosque of Omar, we chanced to pass under a gateway into a large open space. Whilst we were wondering where we had got to, we became aware that sundry small stones and bits of orange peel were being thrown in our direction; and, on turning to see whence they came, and, if necessary, to remonstrate with the offenders, we observed numbers of men and boys all running towards us. Of course our first impulse was to walk off in the opposite direction, totally careless whither it might lead; but, to our annoyance, we met green turbans coming from every quarter, who seemed to take a great deal more interest in our movements than we fancied they had any business. We at last determined to make a stand, and were speedily surrounded. Not understanding a single word of Turkish, we were at a loss to answer the multitudinous cries and queries which were addressed to us from all sides. Concluding from the direction of their outstretched arms that we were to return whence we came, we retraced our steps, and, our progress considerably accelerated by pushes and vociferations in an angry tone of "Yessukh, ya Nasarani!" we at length reached the gateway which had introduced us to all this excitement. Here our attendant crowd paused and watched us with much

laughter, as we made off up the street we had originally left, followed by a stray stone or two from the boys.

When we reached our hotel, we enquired the meaning of the word “Yessukh!” and found that it meant “It is forbidden;” and on our relating our adventure to Mohammad, he told us that we had got by mistake into the outer court of the Mosque, and that it was well for us we had gone no further, or it might have fared worse with us.

My last day in Jerusalem being Palm Sunday, I rendered myself at the early hour of four in the morning beneath the great dome of the Sepulchre Church, in order to be present at the sunrise mass. As usual on such occasions, there was a great deal of excitement and ill-feeling displayed among the different sects: all were armed with palm branches, with which they strove to enforce their various opinions; and we thought it quite time, after having been jostled about for an hour or so, to retire from a scene which, as the sun was not yet up, and there were only half a dozen candles and a couple of dimly-burning lamps to assist in his absence, certainly wanted more light thrown upon it than was produced by the noisy multitude, whose only object seemed to be that of making a row, and seeking for

opportunities of “assault and battery” with their palm-branches.

Before retiring to bed, I ascended to the house-top, to have one more look at the Holy City before the bustling moment of actual departure arrived. It was a lovely night, and the great dome of the Sepulchre Church loomed larger and seemed nearer than by day. Afar off, resting lightly upon the Eastern ramparts, glanced beautiful in the moonlight the lofty cupolas and well-proportioned domes of Omar and El-Aksa, like stars of the first magnitude among the countless domelets of the intervening and surrounding houses. Behind me, sturdy and strong, stood the almost imperishable tower of Hippicus, destined—if Mussulman forebodings have any foundation—to see Jerusalem again overthrown, and in the hands of conquerors. No mueddin now from the minaret’s gallery urged the waking Musulman to prostrate himself in prayer; gone to bed were all the singing-boys; closed were all the coffee-shops; and, save the occasional barking of a dog prowling about in search of food, the whole city slept.

Filled with regret at the thought of leaving it all behind me on the morrow, I still lingered on the house-top, unwilling, while it was yet in my power,

to have done with gazing on a scene upon which the Saviour must so often have looked. Was not the general aspect of the city the same now as 1800 years ago? Beneath me lay the pool of Hezekiah, and behind me the tower of Hippicus, as then; the streets were as narrow and as steep as when our Saviour walked along them; and, except that, on looking eastwards to the Mount of Olives, I should have seen the Temple marked against the sky instead of the minarets and dome of Omar, Jerusalem was almost the same.

Notwithstanding the amount of levity with which I have alluded in these pages to the numerous sacred spots in and about the Holy City, I certainly did not follow the prevailing fashion of doubting their identity. I endeavoured, from first to last, to believe, so far as it was in accordance with the dictates of common sense, every thing that my guide told me — my principle being, that as the shortness of my visit did not give me time to sift the “whys” and “wherefores” of the case, I derived more pleasure from fancying them all true, than by continually struggling, as the majority of travellers are prone, to find out a reason for laughing at them.

All Christian travellers, whether credulous or

the contrary, stand, the first day of their arrival in Jerusalem, on the same ground, and, beyond all question, are in that city, where the Saviour spent the greater part of His life, and where eventually upon Calvary He died. This granted, I found it impossible to sympathise with any one who tried to throw every thing—the site of *this*, or the actual existence of *that*—overboard altogether, as supremely ridiculous, and without foundation. What more likely than that anything, however trifling, in connection with so great a fact in the annals of the world as the descent of God's own Son to earth, should have been treasured up in the minds of those who loved Him, and of whom there must always have been a few; and that the greatest delight these chosen few took in calling to mind that Saviour, was by handing down from father to son the very spots where this precept was enunciated, or that lament uttered?

But, however weak this argument, it is only reasonable to conclude, that I remember all the points of real or supposed interest with far more pleasure than the man who entered Palestine, and finally left it, the disposition ever uppermost in his mind to disbelieve or sneer at all he heard or saw.

CHAP. XXVI.

NABLOUS.

HAVING sent on the tents and baggage, with directions where to encamp for the night, my friend and I, in company with three other English travellers, who had left Cairo a week or ten days before I had, to proceed to Jerusalem by way of Mount Sinai, bade a final adieu to the Holy City; and, making our exit through the Jaffa Gate, we soon after struck into the Damascus road, and in half an hour, ascending to the summit of a slight eminence, we looked our last upon its old grey walls, and its mingled mass of domes and minarets, which spired shiningly into the evening sky.

Our horses were all in excellent condition, and unable to control our spirits at the thoughts of the pleasant month we were about to spend almost entirely in our high pommelled Turkish saddles—(albeit, that the saddles themselves had nothing in common with our anticipated happiness, for such uncomfortable pieces of horse-furniture I trust I

may never again have anything to do with)—we every now and then broke into a headlong gallop over the soft turf with which the road was edged on either side at intervals, leaving the dragomen far behind, whom long experience had taught to husband their steeds' strength against the heavy work we should have to encounter.

About an hour after leaving Jerusalem we passed, on our left, the half-ruined village of Ramah, the ancient Gibeah, and at half-after six, P. M., we reached our encampment at Beer, distant from the Holy City four hours.

After sun-down it became very cold and gusty, and so dense a mist came gathering round our tents as quite to shroud a nearly full moon from our view.

Striking the tents at sunrise the next morning, we came, after five hours' riding, through a pretty and fertile country, to some ruins situated at some distance from the road, marked in our maps as Silon.

All Eastern writers, and especially Dr. Robinson, have determined this spot to be the site of the ancient Shiloh, where was the Ark of God, and where the Tabernacle was first set up by Joshua. We paused here for half an hour to rest our horses

and to partake of lunch. Attracted by the sight of Frank travellers, several men came out of a village not far off, and began to talk to the dragomen. They seemed at a loss to know why so many Europeans came out of their road to see these ruins; and supposing that our object must be to find money or treasure of some kind, they informed us that we, like all others, were doomed to disappointment, for that they had searched a hundred times in every nook and corner, and if there ever had been anything worth taking, *we ran a poor chance.*

Leaving Shiloh, and passing the village of Lebonah, or El-Lubban, we descended, after a ride of three hours, into the beautiful plain of Mukna, which lay stretched out before us as far as we could see, bounded on either side by lofty mountains. Merely skirting this plain, we soon began a gradual ascent of the mountains on our left, till we reached, about a quarter of the way up, the high road to Nablous. Along this road we travelled for rather more than an hour with the most delightful view over the plain beneath and the distant mountainous country, till we arrived at the point where the mountains are divided by the valley, which branches off from the plain towards Nablous, between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. Winding round the base of

Mount Gerizim, we entered the valley in which Nablous, the ancient Sychar, is situated. The town, embosomed in the richest foliage, is built on the hill side, and is of some considerable size, with numbers of minarets tapering up into the sky above the trees. We pitched our tents, just beyond the town, on a grassy knoll, surrounded with gardens and overhanging a brook, which rushed by within hearing, beneath the shade of some mulberry trees. Whilst engaged, after dinner, with a rubber at whist, Mohamad came with a solemn countenance to say, that as the people of Nablous were a great set of thieves, it was necessary to keep a good watch through the night. The other gentlemen with whom we were travelling quite laughed at the idea of being robbed. "How was it possible," said they, "unless any one came into the tent? And we should like to see any one go as far as *that* without waking *us*." However, to make doubly sure, they engaged a guard from the town to watch at their tent door; whilst *our* dragoman, Mohamad, placing no reliance upon any guardianship but his own, spared us the expense of hiring watchers, and agreed to mount guard, himself and loaded carbine, as usual.

. Wishing our travelling companions good night,

we retired to our tents, which had been pitched at some little distance from theirs; and going quietly off to sleep, we trusted the morning would find us alive, and all our property safe.

The first thing we heard on rising was, that our friends' tent, notwithstanding the hired watchers and their own extreme wakefulness, had been cut into during the night, and one gun, two saddle-bags, containing clothes, &c., and other valuables abstracted, without any one being the wiser, until daylight discovered the robbery. Thanks to our own dragoman's care, *we* had lost nothing: but much as we felt disposed to joke our friends at their having been so sure that the least noise within a hundred yards of the tents would have woken them, we felt that it would be cruel, as we stood looking at the traces of the burglary, and heard them lamenting, among other things, the loss of a favourite fowling-piece.

On questioning the guards who had been paid to prevent such audacity, they declared that, quite unconsciously, they had all dropped off to sleep. Iniquitous as such a proceeding would have been on their part, we could not help suspecting that they had been wide awake enough to have committed the crime themselves, especially as one of their

number was missing, having been obliged, as they said, to return to his work in the town before the sun rose.

Acting on the suspicion, our friends proceeded with the remainder of the guard before the Cadi, in order to try and recover, by means of the bastinado, their stolen property; whilst my companion and I mounted our horses, and rode back along the road we had travelled by the day before, as far as the foot of Mount Gerizim, in order to visit Jacob's well. This well is situated a little below the level of the road, about a mile and a half from the city, and presents the appearance of a large mound with a hole in the top. Dismounting from our horses, we let ourselves successively down into this hole. When our eyes had accustomed themselves to the darkness, we found that we were standing in a vaulted chamber, very much dilapidated, in one corner of which was the well at which our Saviour sat and talked with the woman of Samaria. On dropping a stone into it, the words of the text were verified, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is *deep*;" for it was comparatively quite a long time before the sound of the stone, arriving at the bottom, broke faintly upon our ears above. Very probably the vaulted chamber in our Lord's

time was a building erected over the well for coolness, and where travellers coming from Jerusalem would rest to refresh themselves before entering the town of Sychar, and which custom would naturally have led to such a conference as took place between our Lord and the woman of Samaria.

When we got back to Nablous, we found that, though our friends had been engaged the whole time with the Cadi, and though several of the guards had been subjected to a most severe bastinado, in the hopes of extorting confession, no tidings had been gained of the robbers. However, one man, whose account of himself had, I suppose, been more slip-shod than the others, had been thrown into prison; and, as in the case of the watch, the Cadi held out hopes that the gun, &c., would shortly be forwarded to the British Consulate at Jerusalem.

Whilst striking the tents, a deputation of women, headed by the mother of the unfortunate man now in prison, came out of the city to intercede for him. The poor mother, whilst all the other women kept up a well-sustained howl, came frantically towards us, and not being able to determine which looked the most kind-hearted amongst us, began to kiss all our toes promiscuously, as we sat on our horses, all

ready to start for our day's journey. Till the dragoman explained their object, we were perplexed to know what they wanted. At first, in the pride of our hearts, we conceived that the inhabitants of Nablous in general were so sorry to lose us, that they had selected all the most beautiful of their women to entreat us to stop a little longer. Being pretty certain that the man for whom they were shedding all these tears was the culprit, we told them it was no use imploring us, the law must take its course. When they found that we were not to be entreated, they changed their demeanour, and with one accord began to curse us in a manner which, if the violence of their gestures was any criterion of the bitterness of their words, must have been dreadful to hear; but as we were in happy ignorance of what they were talking, or rather screaming about, and the dragoman only laughed at them, we rode off without paying any attention to the showers of dust and small stones which followed us.

It may seem to have been a rather reckless proceeding, the having half a dozen men bastinadoed, and one man more severely than the rest, and finally thrown into prison, whilst we quietly rode off without ever coming to any conclusion as to where and by whom our property had been taken; but the fact

was, that we had by this time seen quite enough of Eastern courts of justice to be quite certain that, if the man had taken the gun, he would long ere this have "tipped a wink" to the Cadi to that effect, who only waited our departure to become the happy possessor of it by the presentation of a mere trifle to the man, who now, with a self-possession truly wonderful, lay writhing beneath the whip of the kawass.

The morning was far advanced before we had got clear of Nablous and out of hearing of the execrations of its women, so that, as we had a long day's journey before us, we were obliged to hurry our horses and mules along. In about an hour's riding we came to where the road divided, leading in a northerly direction on our right, over the hill to Yanîn, and whither we sent the mules with orders to encamp near the town; whilst we followed on our horses the other branch to the north-west, along a stony valley towards Sebaste, the ancient Samaria.

After a toilsome ride of three hours up and down and along the hot sides of an unusually broken and rugged range of mountains, we arrived, at one P. M., at the village which occupies the site of the ancient Samaria. It is situated on the summit of a hill, standing alone in the centre of a mountain basin.

The most conspicuous object rising above its rather neatly built houses, and visible from a great distance, is the handsome tower of a Christian church, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, but the architecture of which allows of its bearing no earlier date than the times of the Crusaders. It is a ruin of some extent, and its lofty walls, pierced with many windows, still stand almost entire, enclosing a large open space partially converted into a mosque by the inhabitants. On the further side of the village from the church, we came upon the scattered remnants of many a palace and temple, with which, in centuries gone by, the beautiful city of Samaria was adorned. Standing on the brow of the hill, we gazed over many acres of ground covered with large squares, and long avenues of erect and fallen columns, with here and there great blocks of masonry, which once might have gone to swell the lofty proportions of some triumphal arch. Descending the hill-side, and winding in and out among the limestone columns at its base, we soon looked our last upon Samaria, and were pushing on to gain our encampment at Yanîn before daylight forsook us.

All the afternoon we rode across a succession of plains freshly green with the springing crops of corn and millet, and separated from each other by slight

eminences. Numerous villages, all bearing names which I have found it quite impossible to remember, and all holding places in the varying scale of poverty and dirt, crowned the summits of nearly every hill we passed.

Late in the day an event occurred, which tended to raise us very considerably each in his own particular estimation, though I can hardly hope that the conclusion we formed of each other will come home to the minds of all who may read this journal, as such a perfect *ut sequitur*.

The shadows of what few trees lay sprinkled about the sides of the hill we were ascending were lengthening in the evening sun, till their summits waved far down below among the millet fields in the plain, as we approached the notoriously badly conducted, worse principled village of Jeba. Our party, consisting of six, all well mounted and armed, rode through its single street (doubtless the "High-Street," if we had been sufficiently learned to have deciphered the Arabic inscription which we saw traced on the corner house) carelessly enough, paying but little attention to the various impertinent remarks and distorted noses (they seemed to be quite ignorant of the effect produced upon every Englishman by the application of the thumb, backed

up by the four outstretched fingers) which were directed at us from all sides. We had scarcely got clear of the village, when, on looking back, we observed several of the men picking up large stones, with every intention of pitching them at our heads. Having previously determined what to do, should their daring reach such a pass, we only waited for the first stone to fly harmless among our horses' legs, when suddenly wheeling round, we charged at full gallop back again amongst the assembled villagers. Swinging our rhinoceros-hide whips above our heads, we tore down the "High-Street," dealing pain and vexation on either side of us. The inhabitants, who didn't seem to possess such a thing as a gun, or I suppose they would have produced it pretty quickly, fled, expostulating in every direction. Bent on our work of chastisement, we returned at the same pace up the now deserted "High," and only drew rein at its extremity, at finding the whole of Jeba assembled in an open space, with the women in front to entreat us to be gone. After pulling one man (whom we had detected throwing a stone of most extraordinary dimensions) out of his own house, in order to thrash him with more comfort to ourselves, we condescended to receive a most humble apology, to which the whole village sang a

chorus; and then turning our back upon Jeba, we rode away, thus giving them another opportunity for exercising their faculty of stone-throwing if they had been so minded. So complete was our victory that we almost regretted afterwards we had not relieved them of a few sheep and horned cattle, which we might have carried away as trophies of our Jeba *coup-de-main*.

Soon after losing sight of the subjugated village, we gained the summit of a high range of mountains, whence we had the most glorious panorama spread out for our admiration. Hardly noticing the lesser hills and broken country immediately beneath us, our eyes rested upon the far off plain of Esdraelon, which, bathed in the richest tints of a Syrian sunset, swept past Jezreel and the Little Hermon, away to the bases of the mountains of Nazareth. How long we might have remained gazing upon this beautiful scene, I know not, had we not been warned by the dragoman, who all this time had been altering his horse's girths, occasionally kicking him when he sidled away, that we still had some miles before we reached Yanîn. Winding down the steep mountain-side into the undulating country below, we rode through a succession of dark green clive groves, until we entered, in two hours, a dell

extending along between naked rocks all the way to Yanîn, a distance of about three miles.

The sun, which had for some time disappeared in the west, had left no last gleam to guide us to our tents; and had it not been for the glimmering of our camp fires at some distance from the city, we might have been long in finding them.

After a quiet night and no further burglaries, though we had been led to expect something of the kind here, we struck our tents at seven, A. M., and, riding for two hours across a broad plain, we arrived at Jezreel, situated, like all Syrian towns, on the summit of a hill. Beautiful as Jezreel may have been once with Ahab's palace and gardens, and Naboth's vineyard (for the latter must have of necessity been also beautiful, or a king would never have set his heart upon it), it is so no longer: a few mud huts, about the same number of inhabitants, and double the number of dogs, form the town and society of Jézreel as it is.

From the brow of the hill on which it stands we had one of the most interesting as well as beautiful scenes laid out at our feet in the whole of Syria. The view on the left was bounded by the range of hill which we had crossed the day before, and which we now saw extending far away westwards to the

Mediterranean, terminating in the bluff promontory of Mount Carmel. Immediately opposite, on the further side of the grand plain of Esdraelon, which lay stretched out beneath us in all its length and breadth, rose the mountains about Nazareth; while on the right the grassy slopes of Little Hermon, with the village of Shunem at its foot, shut out Mount Tabor and all the country beyond. Without turning our heads either to the right or left, our eyes rested upon the entire stage, as it were, upon which were played all the acts of the Second Book of Kings, in connection with Elisha and king Ahab. The entire length of the road along which the prophet ran before the chariot of Ahab was before us, from the summit of Carmel to the Gate of Jezreel, where perhaps we were standing. Just below us, on the side of the hill, must have been Naboth's vineyard, while on the right lay the little village of Shunem, which the prophet so often visited in his walks, and where he raised the Shunamite woman's son to life.

Often when I had sat at church in England, listening to the reading of the ninth chapter of the Second Book of Kings, I had been struck with its excessively dramatic character, when Jehu was anointed to be king over Israel in the room of

Joram, and when at the head of his company he was observed, by the watchmen on the towers of Jezreel, directing his headlong course over the broad plain of Esdraclon towards that city: and now with redoubled force did that chapter recur to me, as I stood on the heights of Jezreel with the whole scene before me, barring the presence of Jehu and his chariots. One difficulty which had always presented itself was now removed—*viz.*, how the different watchmen, who had been despatched at long intervals from Jezreel with messages to Jehu, who was “driving furiously” towards the city, managed all of them to arrive, to deliver their messages, and to fall into the rear of his train; and yet that so long an interval should elapse before he actually arrived at the city, that Joram had time to collect an escort befitting his station as king, and go forth to meet him. I say this difficulty was done away with, for I now saw, that as Jehu had to cross the whole extent of the great plain of Esdraclon, he must have been observed coming by the watchmen two full hours before he could arrive at the city, which would have given Joram ample time to have dispatched his several messengers, and also to have summoned his soldiers, when the chariots had approached so near the city that the watch

men were able to announce them, by their being so furiously driven, to belong to Jehu the son^{of} of Nimshi.

Descending from Jezreel, and skirting the eastern extremity of Esdraelon, we passed through the village of Shunem, at the foot of Hermon, and rounding a shoulder of that mountain, we came in sight of Mount Tabor, with the village of Nain not far from us on our right.

An hour after noon we arrived at Deberath, a village at the foot of Tabor, and where we pitched our tents under some olive trees. After resting for an hour, we commenced the ascent of the mountain, by no means a difficult one, occupying us about an hour. The whole mountain side, but especially towards the summit, is thickly foliaged with the holm-oak and the arbutus; and among the high grass grow so many rare and beautiful flowers, that it seemed like walking through the most carefully tended pleasure grounds in England. The summit is a piece of table-land covered with ruins, and almost every description of tree and shrub. We spent an hour or so enjoying the extensive prospect; and in examining the ruins, which cover a large area, we traced in many places the remains of walls, and at intervals of towers and bastions. In the

centre we penetrated into several vaulted chambers; whilst running nearly all round was a deep and wide moat, crossed in some places by stone bridges. Tradition has fixed this mountain as the scene of the Transfiguration, and it is therefore the resort of numbers of pilgrims; to which latter fact countless bits of old boots, and remnants of pocket-handkerchiefs hanging from the lower branches of all the trees, bear witness.*

* It is the custom of pilgrims in the East always to leave behind them small portions of their wearing apparel, as mementos of their visits to different holy places.

N. B. It is a good thing that those of our own countrymen who are given to inscribing their names wherever they go, are sufficiently educated to enable them to dispense with such a custom. I need hardly say, that an elm-tree bedizened with the corners of thousands of pocket-handkerchiefs presents a considerably more ludicrous appearance than even a garden-seat covered with initials.

CHAP. XXVII.

NAZARETH.

ONE never appreciates English scenery so much as when its counterpart is stumbled upon some few thousand miles away from the white cliffs of our dear old Island. Without fear of contradiction, I assert that all the country round Mount Tabor, and thence in a northerly direction towards Galilee, might, with every reason, be quoted as, if possible, surpassing what even we fastidious people in England would be induced unqualifiedly to praise.

We were in our saddles shortly after sunrise, and, skirting round the base of Tabor, rode on towards Galilee. Shady valleys watered by tiny brooks, which raced sparkling from the mountain above us along their cool depths, ushered us down great woodland aisles on to broad park-like plains timbered with sturdy oaks; across the glades gleamed brightly in the morning sun birds of every variety and plumage; skylarks shook their feathered throats,

as, fluttering for a moment at our feet, they soared singing upwards into the cloudless sky; whilst high over our heads, but often approaching within range of our guns, circled royally, and with undisguised contempt for our powder-flasks and shot-belts, that king of birds, the eagle.

At times we found ourselves winding up densely wooded hill-sides, our horses with difficulty forcing for themselves a passage through the brake and tall hilfch grass; whilst our mules could be heard with their tinkling bells far in the rear, quite lost to view, but sometimes appearing one at a time, as they emerged in single file from among the bushes, lingering for a moment upon a little promontory of mossy rock, before plunging again into the thicket that lay between us. High above us, the barrels of their guns continually flashing among the trees as they caught the sun, scampered in twos and threes our light-hearted, eternally-singing muleteers, the end and object of their lives being always to take "short cuts."

We too were in the best of spirits; and as we cantered on, whenever we came to an opening ahead of the caravan, in common with all other living things, we revelled joyously in the delicious warmth of a Syrian morning sun.

A little after noon we gained the summit of a hill immediately over Tiberias, commanding a most lovely view of the town, surrounded with old walls and fast crumbling towers, which, jutting out a few yards into the lake, have for centuries been reflected on the glassy surface of “deep Galilee.”

Another hour saw us encamped about half a mile to the south of the town, on the edge of the lake, our tent pegs almost washed by its tiny waves, and close to the baths which were erected some few years back by Ibrahim Pasha, over some hot springs. From our tent-doors we looked upon a truly beautiful picture: to the left the old town with its towers seemed as if reposing on the surface of the calm lake; in the centre, at the distance of forty miles, the interval charmingly diversified with the slopes and broken summits of numerous lesser mountains, rose the snowy summit of Gebel-el-sheikh, the great mountain, or, as it is better known to travellers, the Hermon of the Bible; whilst the right was filled in, on the further side of the lake, with the rugged and still inhospitable country of the Anazees or Gadarenes.

After bathing, we strolled along the banks in the sunset, making bouquets of the numerous beautiful flowers which abound here, occasionally giving assis-

tance to one of our party, a most indefatigable entomologist, in chasing rare butterflies, and other field sports.

Between our encampment and the town we observed many broken columns, and large stones lying in the lake, a few feet from the shore. These are the sole remnants that we saw of the city whither our Saviour so often resorted from his native town of Nazareth, but still the view we had from our tent-doors was the same as ever : the icy summit of Hermon towered glistening up into the blue sky, the same to-day as in the time of the Psalmist; and stretching along the opposite shore lay the country of the Gadarenes, uninviting and barren as in the days of our Saviour.

The town itself, which from a distance looks poverty-stricken and ruinous in the extreme, offered us no temptation to examine its interior, the more so as Mohammad, when first we came in sight of it this morning, became visibly agitated, shrugging his shoulders and turning up his nose, at the same time turning to us, and saying, "Voyez vous, Monsieur, cette mauvaise ville ? le roi des puces y demeure." Now considering that we had kept up for the last four months a running fire of maledictions upon his innumerable subjects in other parts of Syria and in

Egypt, we felt that to approach the very court of his Majesty would be to pass the Rubicon of swearing, and go mad at once.

The reason that the town of Tiberias has fallen to so low an ebb of misery, was an earthquake of a very terrible character which visited this city in the year A.D. 1837; and as yet the inhabitants have hardly moved a finger to repair the damages then incurred. Massive walls lie either shattered on the ground, or stand rent asunder in a dozen different places, whilst numerous heaps of rubbish mark the spots where once stood houses.

Leaving the blue depths of Galilee behind us on the next morning, and riding southwards, we came, after six hours, to the village of Cana, prettily situated in a hollow, and surrounded with groves of pomegranate trees, diversified with numerous acacias and carob trees, beneath the shade of which we lunched, and gave our poor horses some rest, who were nearly teazed to madness by the flies.

Cana is inhabited almost entirely by Greek Christians, and as their Easter festivals were going on, we were unable to see what is generally shown to travellers; among other things, one of the water-pots, from which was poured the miraculously made wine. I cannot say that I took this disappointment very

much to heart, for I almost doubt my being able to have credited its identity.

Another two hours' riding brought us over a mountain of some elevation down into Nazareth, where we pitched our tents beneath some olives just outside the town, instead of going to the convent. Before sitting down to dinner our dragoman came to us with a troubled countenance, to say that the only fountain whence we could obtain water, that of the Virgin, was in the hands of the Turkish soldiers, who would not permit our servants to draw without an order from their colonel. Accordingly to his quarters we repaired, where he received us most courteously; and pipes and coffee having been discussed, and compliments exchanged, we stated the cause of our visit. Of course, as we anticipated, he was only too proud, considering the assistance that the English were rendering his lord and master the Sultan at Constantinople, to be of any service to us, and immediately dispatched a soldier with an order to allow our men to draw to their hearts' content. In return for his politeness, we asked to be honoured with a visit in the evening, which he complied with; and eschewing wine-glasses, drank so much raw brandy from a tea-cup, that he perfectly astonished us by wishing us good night about eleven o'clock, P. M., and walking toler-

ably erect out of the tent without support of any kind.

The next day being Sunday we remained encamped—a proceeding which was much approved of by our muleteers, who, being Greek Christians, preferred spending their Easter thus, to trudging after our horses for nine or ten hours beneath a hot sun. This day will be remembered by the different members of our party, among other incidents, for a “grand junction dinner,” of which we partook in the cool of the evening outside the tents.

Forming two parties, each with our own servants, our custom had ever been to dine separately, and to indulge in a pleasant *réunion* afterwards over a rubber at whist; but to-day being Sunday and the Greek Easter, and being encamped at Nazareth, and for various other weighty as well as trifling reasons, we agreed that we should all dine *en masse*, and that the two cooks, each of whom fancied himself the best in existence, should try and outdo each other. Halifa and Haroun, as the two were named, kept us in one continued roar of laughter the whole time: the excitement under which each laboured to elicit our praises was something fearful! It was agreed that each should take it in turn to provide the various dishes; that is to say, Halifa was to make the soup,

and that by the time *that* was discussed, Harûn should have something else, a pilaff or a ragout, in readiness, and so on. If they had kept to this arrangement, all would have passed off quietly enough, but as *celerity* seemed to them the great thing, our meal became a scene of the greatest confusion; for as Harûn had concocted his pilaff before the soup was ready (each had his own cooking apparatus), Halîfa detected him trying to dish up before his right turn came: this made the latter bounce up to us to expostulate, and then in the middle of his sentence off he rushed to bring the soup as it was: a neck and neck race then ensued, the pilaff winning by about a second. Then came an animated discussion, Halîfa declaring that we ought to have the soup first, because he had been told to lead off; Harûn imploring us to eat his pilaff, because he had been able to put it on the table first: then, without waiting to see what we were going to do, they hurried back to their several fires, to try and outstrip each other in the next course. I need hardly say, that they cooked enough things to have lasted us a week, though, if they had only supplied us with food enough for an hour, we should never have consumed it in that time for laughing. Towards night our meal drew to a close; and bestowing an equal amount of praise on

each, we managed to pacify their ruffled tempers, though I fancy they looked at each other with green eyes for several days afterwards.

Strolling about after dinner in the vicinity of the tents, just at that interval when in the East you may actually watch the struggle between night and day, and see the former advancing with rapidly increasing strides across the plain, flinging the heavy folds of its black mantle after the latter, which, retreating to the very mountain tops, lingers there but a few short moments, as if to impart what little light it has remaining to the myriads of stars above, which are seen in another quarter of an hour shivering far and wide across the dark vault of heaven — just at this interval, hearing the clatter of a horse's hoofs, and the sound of an enquiring voice in the road beneath, I turned in that direction, and was shortly after met by my Polish friend of the Nile, who had come from Jerusalem by sea, and had ridden across from the port of Caiffa, at the foot of Mount Carmel, in order to visit the shrine at Nazareth, where hearing that we were encamped in the neighbourhood, he had ridden out in order to ask me to come and dine with him at the convent. A very few words sufficed me to explain the impossibility of such a proceeding; but for sociability's sake, I

followed him to his quarters in the town, and passed the remainder of the evening with him over cigarettes and coffee. When I again turned out to retrace my steps to our encampment, it was so intensely dark, that if I had not been sure of my way, I should have been very doubtful of my chance of falling in with my tent before sunrise. As it was, I declined the accompaniment of his servant with a lantern, and wished him a cheerful good-night. I had hardly advanced fifty yards and turned three or four corners, before I found myself completely puzzled as to how to proceed next; and whilst stumbling on, managed to kick up a dog which lay asleep across the road. With a snarl and a growl the animal trotted off, but not before he had roused another dog hard by into a low bark. Some other dog hearing this, felt it his duty, I suppose, to carry on the conversation, so he barked also, but more loudly than the last. Immediately on this several others, unwilling that the ball should stop rolling, threw in a chorus in right good earnest. Very conscious of my perilous position so late at night, and without a lantern, if the animals should once begin to collect, and so encourage each other to attack me, I turned round without a moment's hesitation and walked back towards the convent. But a walk

was soon changed to a run, for by this time all the dogs in Nazareth were awake, and were racing down every street, hardly able to keep their growls in their mouths, so eager did they seem to bite somebody. I need hardly say that it was not very long before I was standing on the door-step of the convent; and as the light streamed out through the open door, it shone into the eyes and among the teeth of about thirty wolf-like animals, crowding together under the opposite wall ready for anything. Imploring now to be provided with what a few moments before I had rejected, I walked back in safety through the town, for though one dog may almost be brave enough to attack you in the dark, a lantern will put a hundred of them to flight. People accustomed only to English dogs will hardly understand the danger I was in; but these animals in the East partake more of the nature of the wolf, and though arrant cowards in single combat, they are able to collect in such large numbers that they quickly spur each other on to commit any enormity. In proof of this there is a story told in Cairo of three men who, walking down to the river late at night without a lantern, were attacked by some dogs, who, collecting to the fearful number of three hundred, fell upon them, and

before any help could arrive, had completely eaten them up.

Rising on Monday morning none the worse for our enormous dinner of the preceding evening, we got into our saddles two full hours before sunrise, and striking into a road which led over the hills at the back of Nazareth, we rode on ahead of the mules towards Mount Carmel.

After some time we came to where the road divided on the right towards Acre: here we paused, in order to send the mules under the charge of Mohammad to the latter town, with orders to pitch the tents on the sea-shore, a few hundred yards from the walls; and then again pursuing our course to Mount Carmel, we rode for about two hours through a second edition of the Tabor park-land, studded with oaks. The morning mist, which had hung heavily to the mountain side on leaving Nazareth, so as to render the air quite chilly, was now rapidly clearing away, or, where it still remained, was so saturated with the warm glow of the early sun, that as we looked down through it among the intervening trees upon the plain beneath, we amused ourselves with fancying the scene to be one of Danby's pictures, "Sunrise near Nazareth."

After descending into the plain, four hours' riding,

with the sea always in sight, and the range of Carmel on our left, brought us to Câiffa, a small town built close on to the sea, much in the style of those on the Corniche road between Genoa and Nice, and which had often struck me, when travelling between those two places, as presenting a semi-Italian, semi-Oriental appearance. Continuing our ride through its single narrow street, and traversing the wooded plain on the further side, we arrived at the foot of Mount Carmel, the bluff promontory of a long mountain ridge, which running out to sea for some distance, forms the southern-most side of the Bay of Acre. A very tolerable road leads up from the plain to the summit, upon which stands the famous Carmelite Convent of St. Elias. Rather more than seven hours after leaving Nazareth, we dismounted at the doors, and were most courteously received by the Padre Carlo, a personage well known to all travellers by this route. As he concluded we were hungry, he jokingly proposed to try what the refectory could supply us with; "but first," he said, "you would like to wash your hands;" and so saying, he conducted us through a succession of pretty little bedrooms, nicely furnished, leaving one of us in each: but as there were many more bedrooms than there were

of us, he was saved the trouble of resorting to any expedient for stowing us all away, as the book of riddles and conundrums has it of the old lady, who managed to put *ten* gentlemen into *nine* bedrooms, giving each a separate apartment.

By and by we all sat down to a leg of mutton and potatoes, the good Padre presiding, and amusing us the while with French anecdotes of the convent, its various visitors, and himself. When we had finished, he took us over the convent. The massive simplicity, so to speak, of its design, and all its arrangements, pleased us excessively, but especially the chapel, which being quite devoid of tapestry and all superfluous ornament, formed a striking contrast to the numerous Greek and Latin Churches, of which we had lately seen so much in Jerusalem, and which are so loaded with tapestry, gilding, and painting as to produce a most painful effect. The form of the chapel was circular, beneath a dome with four deep recesses, one on each side, occupied by altars: a few steps below the high altar led us down into the so-called grotto of St. Elias, hewn out of the natural rock, unadorned by tapestry of any kind, the only attempt at display being four silver lamps, which are kept constantly burning, to shed their united light upon a simple

shrine. On the left of this grotto we were shown the spot (the sarcophagus having been removed) where the remains of Matilda, Queen of Richard Cœur de Lion, were interred.

Before taking leave of the Padre (for we purposed sleeping in our tents, beneath the walls of St. Jean d'Acre), we ascended to the flat roof of the convent, which commands a view of the entire bay, and what was once considered the impregnable town of Acre. It was from this position that the Padre told us he was a spectator of the siege in 1840, and of the final blowing up of the magazine.

Thanking him for all his attention, and leaving a donation in the convent box, we again mounted our horses, and descending into the plain; and retracing our steps through Câiffa, we rode along the sands the whole way to Acre, a distance of about ten miles, enjoying the soft evening air, and amusing ourselves with bathing our horses' feet in the small waves, as they broke upon the shore. As we had given orders to Mohammad to encamp near the sea, we fully expected to find the tents pitched and our tea ready on arrival, so that our vexation, after a long day's ride, was great at finding no traces of either mules or tents. Thinking they might have mistaken our directions, and have encamped

on the other side of the town, we rode thither ; but still nothing was either to be seen or heard, save a few herons and the distant murmur of the city ; so we rode back, to have another look on the other side, but again we found ourselves all alone, this time without the herons. Rapidly the sun went down, throwing a flood of light along the calm sea, gilding the shattered walls of Acre, and crimsoning a few fleecy clouds, which seemed to have risen from some nether world, as if to receive him for the night, and, in the absence of twilight, it soon became perfectly dark.

As it was now getting serious, we proposed dividing, and sending Achmed, our friend's dragoon, off in another direction, to scour about, shouting “*Mohammad !*” agreeing, in the event of either party meeting with success, to make the sea our trysting-place.

A few minutes served to separate us all in different directions, and I found myself riding quite alone, in anything but a serene state of mind ; my horse stumbling continually over a stone, or putting his foot in a hole. Coming every now and then to a pause, I listened long and painfully for the well-known sounds of our camp, the singing of our muleteers, or Mahominad’s angry tones, as he bestowed

his usual amount of kicks upon the cook; but all that came to break the stillness of the night, save my own voice, were those of my different companions, sometimes afar off, and sometimes nearer, shouting the word which we had agreed upon, coupled with a few English expletives. After a time, I made my way back again to the sea with much difficulty, for it was so dark that I could but just make out the outline of my horse's head. By degrees, each having met with the like success, we were all collected with the exception of Achmed, whom we now seemed to have lost as well as the tents.

As it was now really getting late, we determined to procure a lodging of some kind in the town, rather than sleep out upon the sands; but when we came to the gates, we found them closed for the night, and the only answer that we could get, after a quarter of an hour's knocking and shouting, was something to the effect of "taking ourselves off." As we had no 84-pounders to enforce our demands for admittance, we were obliged to raise the siege, and return to the sea. Achmed still not having made his appearance, we concluded that he must have fallen in with Mohammad, so, as a last resource, we determined to strike inland, along the road which

he had taken, and then, if this failed, to make the best of some trees, and go supperless to sleep.

After riding along for some distance in silence, what was our joy to hear Achmed's voice, shouting "Ya Howadji!" We quickly responded, and presently came up with him, accompanied by Mohammad. Our first remark was brimming with exasperation, as we asked Mohammad where on earth he had stowed away the tents; nor was our wrath appeased by the cheerful way in which he answered, "Ah, Messieurs, je suis ravi de vous voir, j'ai cru certainement que vous étiez perdus, et vous voila! les tentes sont dans un endroit bien joli, d'ici une demi heure précisément, où est le jardin d'Abdallah Pasha."* We were perfectly speechless with anger, so, following him in silence, we came, after forty minutes' sharp walking, to our encampment, very tired, but so hungry, that we almost forgave Mohammad on account of the relish with which we devoured our suppers.

* I give our dragoman's answer in the language in which he always addressed us, though, if it is not as perfect as it should be, I would rather the reader laid it at his door, albeit, that I believe Mohammad's French was faultless.

CHAP. XXVIII.

LEBANON.

WHEN in its palmy days, Acre must have been an exceedingly handsome city, and it is melancholy in the extreme to see how totally it has been bereft of all its pride. Passing under a large and somewhat heavy gateway, we strolled along its almost deserted street, flanked on either side by loftier and more substantial buildings than I remember to have seen any where else in the East, and at length reached the bazaars. In these arcades were centred all the bustle and activity of the town, which consisted of a few women going their rounds selling bread, about *two* sellers of stuffs sitting listlessly smoking over their unheeded wares, a barber who seemed about to shave himself for want of a customer, and half a dozen dogs lying asleep wherever a gleam of sunshine found its way on to the ground through the torn roof. Fearful of being seized with the "blues," we hurried away towards the ramparts; but here, more than ever, destruction and desolation stared us in the face. Wherever we turned, ruined houses, large

heaps of rubbish, and tottering walls told a terrible tale of what British cannon had done. In one unfortunate house, whose only merit was that it still stood upright, we counted no less than twelve gunshot wounds, in one of which the ball still rested.

Leaving Acre, we continued to ride all the morning along the sea, though at times we mounted along the rocks to a great height above it. During the afternoon we passed the famous "ladder of Tyre," which was made by Alexander the Great, and consists of a succession of steps, or rather ledges in the rock, carrying the road over an immensely high cliff. At 5 P.M., we encamped in a field not far from the sea, about a mile to the south of Tyre.

The next morning, having sent on the baggage to Saida, or Sidon, a day's journey hence along the coast, we mounted our horses and rode into Tyre, or Sûr, as it is now called.

The modern town still stands on the same island, which was converted into a peninsula by Alexander's mole, where once dwelt the merchant kings of Tyre. Riding along its scantily peopled, though, for an Eastern town, its scrupulously clean and symmetrical streets, we presently arrived at its furthest extremity, a distance, I should suppose, of nearly a mile. Here dismounting, and climbing among the

rocks down to the sea, we looked upon all that remains of Tyre and its isles. That once magnificent city, whose ports gave shelter to the world's fleets, whose buildings were palaces, and whose inhabitants were princes, lies buried here; and Time is rapidly destroying the very monuments which he himself raised to her memory along the shore over which she once reigned — to wit, many columns and sculptured blocks of stone, over and around which the blue waves of the Mediterranean ceaselessly break and eddy, and among which the fisherman moors his boat, as he engages in his daily occupation.

Leaving Tyre, and passing beyond the isthmus, we gradually left the sea, and in little more than an hour's riding across the plain, we arrived at a broad and deep river, called by the Arabs Nar-el-Casmia. Crossing it by means of a fine bridge, consisting of a single arch, we again approached the sea, and in three hours arrived at Sarafend, or Sarepta, the Zarephath of the Old Testament, a ruinous village, not far from the sea, built on the slope of a hill, where dwelt Elijah with the widow, whose son he raised to life. Near to Sarafend we passed a small Khân, where for a minute we thought of resting our horses and eating our lunch; but it was so hot, and the sea looked and sounded so refreshing, that we

continued on thither, and indulged our bodies externally as well as internally.

Our road now lay the whole way along the sea to Sidon, the scenery as we approached it getting more beautiful and fertile every step nearly that we took, till at length the town itself burst upon our view, with the old citadel on the summit of a hill to the left, said to have been built by Louis IX., A. D. 1253. Embosomed in a forest of freshly green trees, among which glittered in the sun the gilded crescents of the various mosques, the consular flags fluttering gaily in the breeze, we indulged in many an exclamation of delight as we rode along, unanimously pronouncing Saida indeed a beautiful place. As we approached, we fell in with numberless holiday groups — ladies mounted on gorgeously caparisoned donkeys, and dressed in cerise-colored balloons, their absurdly thin lace yasmuks pending so coquettishly from beneath their large kohl-tinted eyes, that if they had only lived in the Middle Ages, their lords would probably have spent the greater part of the twenty-four hours in hurling their gloves at all strangers whom they deemed gazing with too curious an eye on the pretty mouths but half-concealed beneath; sober grey-bearded Turks, also mounted on donkeys, to all appearance filling the capacity of husbands to the

cherry-colored balloons beside which they rode, and who, if they *had* lived in the Middle Ages, would have done more wisely by keeping their gloves on, than by throwing them at any one likely to pick them up; and besides the ladies and the old men, there were young men mounted on fiery but ill-conditioned horses, whose ears and tails were but just discernible, by reason of their gigantic saddles and extensive bridles.

Just before entering the city, we passed an old Roman column lying by the road-side, on which we traced a Latin inscription, containing the names of Septimus, Severus, and Pertinax, which Maundrell, who travelled this way 200 years ago, gives in his account of his wanderings. Passing through the cemetery, bright with oleanders and shaded by numerous acacias, and riding through the outskirts of the city, we encamped on the further side, close to the sea, beneath a tamarisk tree.

Sidon is still a fine bustling town, built on the rise of the hill, whose summit is crowned by the castle of Louis IX.

Like all Eastern towns, its streets are crooked and very narrow, and rendered more than usually dark by the lofty stone houses which line them on either side. Though our stroll through it was made early

in the morning, we found the bazaars, unlike those of Acre and Tyre, already crowded and noisy with the dense throng of Mussulmen and Greeks, who seemed to be "hard at it," making their bargains before the heat of the day commenced. In different parts of the city are several large khâns, for the use of merchants and travellers; but as we preferred encamping in the country, we made no use of any one of them. In walking along the sea, on the northern side of the town, we observed in many parts, half buried in the sand, traces of the old city, granite columns and large foundation stones.

Whilst our breakfast was being prepared, I employed myself at the tent door in making a sketch of this side (the northern) of the city, the centre of the picture consisting of a quaint old bridge supported by heavy buttresses, connecting the city with a most picturesque old fortress of Saracenic architecture, evidently once a place of great strength, though now much dilapidated. At the foot of the bridge stands a large important-looking building, with all the appearance of an English warehouse, though, on our voyage of discovery through the city, we found that it was a barrack-house for the Turkish soldiery.

Saida and its vicinity being well supplied with

water, the whole adjoining plain is occupied by the most beautifully cultivated gardens, dense groves of orange and pomegranate trees, and orchards producing almost all our English fruit—peaches, pears, apricots, cherries, &c.—extending even to the foot of the magnificent range of the Lebanon, which here begins to assert a supremacy over everything.

Fearful of turning the weakest of Sybarites in the midst of such luxuries, and also wishing soon to reach Damascus, we once more put our caravan in motion; and taking leave for a time of the sea, we commenced to toil among the steep passes of Lebanon, and at length attained such a height that, on looking back for a last view of Saida, which we had left with so much regret, it seemed to us more like a toy town—its white houses sparkling in the sun, and their bases washed by the waves of the Mediterranean; these broke upon the shore at so great a depth below, that, though we could plainly discern the long white line of foam, their sound failed to reach us.

After two hours of the roughest riding, we passed close under the castle of Djouni, the residence of the late Lady Hester Stanhope. It stands on the summit of a crag which rises alone in the centre of a large mountain basin, the valley below being

filled with mulberry trees. Our friends' dragoman, Achmed, who had been in her service when a little boy, as a chibouque-ji, or pipe-bearer, and had lived with her many years, amused us by pointing out all the different localities that bore upon the history of the Arab queen, as we rode along, with anecdotes of her mode of life, but which I omit recording, as they were only such as we, and I suppose every one, had heard before. At half-past five, p. m., we encamped on a high piece of table-land, commanding a fine panorama of the surrounding mountains, not far from the Druse village of Kephr-el-Nebrach, after having been in our saddles, clambering up mountain gorges, for ten hours and three-quarters.

Fortunately for us the Lebanon, which is so continually the scene of fighting and of bloodshed between the rival sects of the Maronites and the Druses, was now quiet, so that we were able to travel where we chose, without fear of being robbed. These two sects form almost the entire population of these mountainous districts: they are ever at war with each other, and, secure in their rugged fastnesses, they set the people of the plain at defiance, holding themselves to be decidedly their superiors.

The Maronites are the most devout Christians, and are said to reverence the pope more deeply than any

other Catholics in the world. Their demeanour towards us as travellers, wherever we fell in with them, was courteous in the extreme; nor would they ever permit us to pass through their villages without imploring us to go and see their churches, and assist in their devotions.

The Druses, though once the masters of Lebanon, have been forced to give way before the lately increasing power of the Maronites; though such is still their *esprit de corps*, that a single Druse will smite himself proudly on the chest, and confessing “I am a Druse!” will undertake to fight any *four* Maronites. The rites and ceremonies, even the principles of their religion, they keep a profound secret, but profess to sympathise with the Mussulmen, and hold for their deity, Hákim, the mad Caliph of Egypt.

At six in the morning we were again in our saddles, and, riding through the lovely wady or valley of Barook, and continuing to ascend, we arrived at ten, A. M., at the highest point of the pass, 6000 feet above the sea level. Here we paused a moment, to rest our tired horses and to enjoy the view, which was truly perfect. Behind us we looked over Djouni towards Saida and far away out to sea, across the blue expanse of the Mediterranean: on

our left, above the higher summits of the range, rose the snow-capped mountain of Gebel-el-Sheikh, which was seen apparently quite close when at Tiberias : before us, on the further side of a broad and fertile plain, rose the heights of Anti-Lebanon ; whilst far away southwards we fancied we could make out the blue mountains of Judæa. After drinking some goat's milk and brandy, the former of which we obtained by the payment of a few piastres from some Bedouins engaged here in feeding their flocks, we commenced our descent into the plain. The mountain side being clothed with oak orchards, we secured a little shelter from the heat of the sun, which was intense.

About this time I discovered, strange as it may seem, that my horse, which from various causes, such as being off his feed, striking himself, and getting more meagre every day, had been an object of much anxiety to me ever since leaving Jerusalem, unlike all other horses, preferred going *up* hill to *down*. He reminded me, though the movement was a *vice versa* one, of the eccentricities of the pilgrims in the Desert, who, towards the close of the day, when they began to get tired, abandoned all idea of following the direct road, and, careless where they went, made a point of always going down hill, when-

ever an opportunity occurred, quite forgetting that for every descent they would have to make an ascent. After much anxious thought and observation, I found out why my horse was such an anomaly; his crupper was so short, and the saddle so large and heavy, that the slightest descent nearly cut the poor animal's tail off. Of course, I at once hurried to his relief by ridding him altogether of his crupper; and though the only obstacle in the way of his going down hill was now removed, yet still his old habit stuck by him, and often, when riding along the streets of Damascus, if I stopped to speak either to one of our servants or a friend, I detected my steed gradually edging his fore legs on to the raised foot-way, so as to produce the effect in his mind of going up hill. When we had finished our descent of the mountain, we struck across the plain by the village of Yûb-Yanîn, and encamped, after a most fatiguing ride of ten hours and a half, a little before sunset, at Aithy, a village prettily situated on the first slopes of the range of Anti-Lebanon.

To-day for the first time we saw some women adorned with those curious head-dresses, which one always associates with a journey through the Holy Land, consisting of a silver horn, most elaborately chased, exactly the shape of a ship's speaking

trumpet, and is worn on the forehead in a projecting position, after the manner of unicorns: a white veil attached to the top, and hanging down on either side, gives to the wearer a rather picturesque appearance, though I cannot say I much admired either the horns or the veils.

Having persuaded our muleteers to make one day's journey of it, from Aithy to Damascus, instead of two, as the custom is, we started, on the third morning after leaving Saida, at half-past five, and leaving the village of Rasheia on our right, we soon after entered the Wady Haloue, in parts of which were nearly perpendicular rocks, rising to a height of 300 feet, not more than a stone's throw apart. Along its depths, among dense groves of mulberry trees, rushed a mountain stream, brightly reflecting the first rays of the sun. Arrived at the further extremity of the Wady, we toiled on till noon among the steep limestone passes of Anti-Lebanon, nearly blinded by the sun's fierce glare, as well as baked by its intense heat.

We next found ourselves on some high table-land overlooking a broad plain at our feet, shut in on all sides by mountains; the usual road for travellers lay to the left off this plain; but the quickest mode of reaching Damascus was by crossing it, which the

muleteers were very much against, on account of its being Anazee or Bedouin country, belonging to some ferocious tribes, who were always at war with the Sultan, and paid no respect to the property or to the persons of Europeans travelling with his passports. However, as we had come so far, and we much wished to reach Damascus before the closing of the gates at sunset, we determined to risk the transit. From the height at which we stood, we could easily distinguish in many parts of the plain their black canvass encampments; so that it was with fear and trembling that we slowly wound down the mountain-side, and getting our baggage into something like military order, and establishing ourselves as guards about it, we commenced our march through the robber country. From the height at which we stood the plain seemed perfectly level, but we found, now that we were upon it, that there were many mounds and gentle declivities along which we could travel in safety, without being observed, unless they had detected us in the first instance in our descent; and this they would hardly have done except with the aid of glasses. To our great satisfaction, we reached the further side without interruption, and then again journeying on among the limestone rocks, we arrived at the last mountain pass, from which

point our eyes ranged in a moment of time over the whole vast plain of Damascus, stretching far away for hundreds of miles, with scarce an interruption, as far as the Euphrates and Bagdad the Beautiful. Beneath us, at a distance of four or five miles, lay Damascus itself, "Scham-el-Shereef," as it is lovingly called, "the great and holy city," lying long and snake-like amid a very sea of foliage, its white houses, tapering minarets, and swelling mosque domes glittering in the sunshine among the trees. The whole scene, far and near, bathed in all the rapidly changing hues of a Syrian sunset, was so surpassingly lovely, that in the words of Mahomet, as he drew near to its walls, we exclaimed, "This is too delicious!"

Descending into the plain, we passed many coffee-houses, from out of which issued loud cries, worded in a mixture of Arabic and Italian, to partake of the various refreshments which it was their business to dispense to all thirsty worshippers of Mahomet, "*Ya Howadji! taal-e-hinna! venite qua! questo buono, taib, si signori!*" Presently we plunged into the dense forest in which the city lies so deeply set.

For an hour we continued to ride through it, and so massively did the trees meet arching over our

heads, as to exclude every gleam of sunshine. It is impossible for me to describe the pleasurable sensations with which we suddenly entered these cool retreats; for the whole day we had been toiling among glaring white limestone passes, exposed without a means of escape to the fierce rays of the sun, which streamed down upon us in all their scorching intensity; and now, unwinding the cloths which had bound our heads, and once more seeing clearly and breathing freely, we drank in copious draughts of the cool breezes which played across our path from among the trees. From a noontide silence, so perfect that our very temples broke it with their throbbing, we now listened with delight to the rush and plashing of streams innumerable, as they ran sparkling by, dividing off into as many innumerable directions. Still riding on, we passed many gardens and fruit orchards; and occasionally catching sunny peeps of the city, down long vistas of Spanish chesnut trees, we at last arrived at the gates. For a few minutes, as we rode through the suburbs, we again met the sun face to face, though declining day had subdued its power, and then we again lost it, as we entered the labyrinth of straggling bazaars of which the principal part of Damascus is composed. We dismounted in the outer court of the only hotel

in the city, after having been eleven hours and a half on the road ; and, sending the mules and horses to the nearest khân, we hurried away to dispel the fatigues and heats of the last few days in a Turkish bath.

CHAP. XXIX.

DAMASCUS.

So far as size and importance go, Damascus cannot compare with Cairo : but the latter has become so Europeanized since the days of Mohammad Ali and the Indian transit, that all those dreams of Eastern luxury and romance in which it is the wont of travellers to indulge, as they steam up the Mediterranean towards the sunrising, are only to be realized in all their hoped-for sweetness in the former. The few days which I spent in the cool shade of the Damascus bazaars so completely Orientalized me, that I seemed to look back into my past English life as one would do among the pages of some intimate friend's journal. For four days we did little else than wander here and there in the bazaars, those long Moorish arcades, which, branching into and off from one another, constitute the entire city, and along which, from sunrise till late in the afternoon, keep ever streaming, silently busy, the gaily-dressed inhabitants thereof. No grooms here, as in Cairo, came

shouting and brandishing their whips, for the people to make way for an English clarence containing ladies in "bonnets," or for a mail-phæton driven by a gentleman in a "hat." Save the cry of the sherbet-seller, and the ringing of his brass cups, as he invited the passers-by to drink of his lemon, rose, or almond syrups, no other sound came to break the even murmur, which, emanating from the crowds beneath, seemed to hang among the rafters of the Damascus bazaars.

Many hours of the day we spent in the different khâns for which this city is famous, and where dwell the merchants with their silk stuffs and gold work, destined to be transported in travellers' portmanteaus, as they were in ours, to adorn the drawing-rooms and persons of ladies in England.

The various khâns in Damascus are named after the Sultans who built them, and are, without exception, magnificent buildings. They adjoin the bazaars, and are entered through ponderous gateways, on either side of which, as at the Horse-Guards in Whitehall, stands a mule of extraordinary dimensions splendidly caparisoned, acting in the stead of a sign-board. On passing the gateway, you find yourself in a large court, open to the sky, in the centre of which is a fountain. A cloister runs round the court,

in the shade of which sit collected into groups, smoking their pipes, or wrangling about a piastre, the camel-drivers and muleteers in the service of the merchants lodging in the khân. The walls are generally built of alternate black, red, or white slabs of marble, like an Italian duomo. At each corner of the cloister a stone staircase leads up into a gallery running entirely round, and looking into the court-yard below. On to this gallery open the rooms occupied by the merchant: and here it was that we used to sit, inhaling clouds of tumbak from the bubbling nargilch, sipping iced sherbets, and listening to theplash of the fountain below, or in making offers for gold-embroidered tablecloths.

Strolling out into the bazaars, we used to amuse ourselves in practising what little Arabic we were masters of, bargaining for trifles which we knew we should throw away on the morrow. Often were we interrupted by some old duenna, who, guarding a black silk balloon, which we felt sure contained the pretty wife of some jealous Mussulman, and closely veiled herself, exchanged a few whispers with the seller of stuffs, and then retired, the purchaser of some strange article of female dress. Mixing with the crowd, or standing in the gateways of the khâns, we listened to the itinerant vendors of Eastern

curiosities chanting the merits of their different wares, but who failed to crowd the pith of what they said into *three* words, as men of that class have a happy way of doing in England, advising the passenger in a twinkling, as he hurries by them, of the name, merits, and exact price of the article on sale.

At sunset the city goes to sleep, the shops are all closed; and following all our old Arabian Nights' acquaintances, we leave the spice-laden atmosphere of the bazaars, and go back to dine at the hotel. The mere fact of *dining* would seem to hurl us from the summit of that ladder of Eastern romance to which we had ascended during the day; and it doubtless would have done so, had not the hotel itself helped to prolong, and even to add fresh colouring to our day-dreams—with its large court-yard open to the sky, its deep alcoves, furnished with soft divans, and arabesqued in blue and gold, from the marble flooring to the carved ceiling above, with verses from the Korân, and where we used to dine off pilaffs and lamb stuffed with sweetmeats and pistachio nuts, sipping coffee afterwards in the moonlight, where it streamed down among the citron trees into the fountained court, and sent almost to sleep by the soporific bubbling of our nargiléhs.

Dreaming now of Shems-el-nihar and her much-loved prince of Persia; now of that gentleman, who on the first night of his nuptials was whisked all the way from some exceedingly remote place, and deposited in his scanty night-dress, perhaps at the very gates through which we had entered the city; and last of all, and not unfrequently, of that rich Emir, who, falling in love with the beautiful daughter of the Jew, carried her off from the streets of Damascus, to his mountain palace in the Lebanon, thereby rendering his once solitary home the abode of happiness and love, till in an evil hour came the lady with the “cold heart;”—dreaming of all these tales of romance, which we had read in childhood, and which now seemed to start up before us in sober reality, we used to watch the shadows of the orange trees mount higher and higher up the moonlit walls, till they waved in the soft night air against our bedroom windows, and then we used to separate till the morning. Often it chanced that we met before that time, for if the mosquitoes and the heat conspired to render me sleepless, I used to come out to cool myself on the gallery upon which our rooms opened; and looking over into the court-yard below, I was allured by the plash of the fountain, to which I descended, to find

one of my companions quietly sitting there regarding the stars.

The river Barrada, which flows through the centre of Damascus, sending out tributaries in various directions, gives rise to so many fountains and purling streams, that at night, when all is quiet, the whole city murmurs with the rush and fall of waters. All the best coffee-houses are built over these streams, and, embosomed in trees, become the favourite resort of the inhabitants.

The traveller will do well to confine himself to the bazaars and the coffee-houses, for should he venture beyond, into the suburbs, the dir. the unpleasant hours, and the stifling heat which he will there encounter, will speedily annihilate all the romantic sensations in which he has been indulging, and with his handkerchief to his nose he will make the best of his way back. And yet who would complain? Every rose has its thorns, and the briars of Damascus must be felt by all who would attain to its wonderful sweetne^{ce}.

We left the city beloved of Mahomet at the close of a week, and in a truly triumphant manner, for it was in company with the Polish nobleman and his beautiful wife, whom I introduced to my readers last at

Nazareth, and in honour of whose departure all imaginable consuls, vice-consuls, and kawasses had turned out in their most gorgeous apparel, preceding our caravan on fiery horses for some little distance out of the city on our road to Baalbec.

CHAP. XXX.

BAALBEC.

A DAY's journey from Damascus brought us to the range of Anti-Lebanon, over which we crossed down into the broad plain which divides it and the Lebanon.

Whilst riding between these grand mountain ranges, and when we were within a few miles of the ruins of Baalbee, where we intended to encamp for the night, the sky, which had been all day filling with clouds, suddenly burst over our heads, and, without any warning peals, we found ourselves in the midst of a most sublime thunder-storm. The dark masses of cloud, which had hitherto been resting on the mountain tops, came rolling down their sides, deluging us with rain; flash after flash of lightning nearly blinded us, and sent our horses to their wits' end; whilst, from every cavern and gully among the mountains issued rolls of thunder, which, uniting as they came, broke upon the plain in so deafening a crash, that it sounded like the accumulated crises of a hundred of our English storms.

Giving our horses their heads, we allowed them to tear along the road at their own pace; but by the time we arrived at Baalbec it was all over, and again the sun streamed down upon us in all its wonted brightness.

As the mules were not yet arrived, we tied our horses to some trees, and commenced to climb among the ruins, which were quite different to any that I had yet seen. They consist of one enormous temple, covering within a little the same area as that of Karnak on the Nile. Formerly it was surrounded by an arcade of columns, six of which, still standing in an entirely perfect state, now alone in their glory, would seem to be ever gazing mournfully upon the vast scene of desolation around them, lamenting as it were that *they* only remain the sole guarantees of that magnificence of which they once formed but a small part. The temple seems to have been fortified and garrisoned by the Saracens, for we traced the remnants of a wall running round it, the foundation stones of which are enormous: one of them we measured, and found it to be 65 feet in length.

For so huge a building as this temple (which tradition tells us was dedicated to the sun) must have been, one hardly expects to find such a profusion of elaborate work, so much and such delicate specimens

of stone carving, such a succession of the most exquisitely moulded columns; in fact, the whole surface of its area, covered with such telling mementos of the beauty of its original design, and of the chaste perfection with which it was executed, that though one might easily fancy its elegant proportions to have appeared very possible whilst merely floating about the imagination of its architect, yet when the masses of stone which were to aid in swelling out its gigantic bulk began to be practically handled, one cannot help dwelling with admiration upon the courage of the builder, who, when the temple was yet in its infancy, persevered in his great work; and when these heaps of masonry had risen high enough to enclose within their limits spacious halls and corridors and long avenues of columns; and, lastly, when the great Temple of the Sun was finished, and when the priest or the worshipper could wander about its sacred precincts, gazing upon its sculptured walls and at the tracery work of its numerous colonnades; — he, much more than we, who only gazed upon the wreck and ruin of happier days, must have stood in a state of bewilderment, looking up and around upon so vast a pile of building, and yet seeing that every square inch of wall, ceiling, or gateway was so elaborately carved, as to have employed not only

the ideas, but the very manual labour of the artists themselves.

The key-stone of the gateway, which leads over piles of capitals and broken columns into the principal hall, has slipped, probably during an earthquake, from its original position, and hangs ever on the point of crushing all who pass beneath. Perhaps it was the sense of being within reach of a long-threatened danger, that induced us this evening, after sunset, to seat ourselves on a fallen column, exactly beneath the hanging stone, and to listen as the moon got up, throwing a flood of silver light among the ruined outworks of Baalbec and down into her now deserted hall, to the Count, who, possessing a really fine, manly voice, sang to us many Polish airs, contrasting them in his own amusing way with our Scotch and Irish melodies. Half the night slipped away, and still we sat in the moonlight beneath the hanging stone in the court-yard of Baalbec; but the Countess, malgré the warm Bagdad capote, in which she had so bewitchingly wrapped herself, felt cold at last; so we went back to our tents, having made our salaams and also our adieux to Baalbec all within a few hours.

The early morning sun was streaming brightly around the splendid ruins as we commenced our

day's march over the broad plain, on the verge of which they stand, towards the mountains of the Lebanon, whose summits, glistening with perpetual snow, towered up into the clear sky, apparently not a mile distant. After riding for about three hours, we approached a lofty column, standing all alone in this vast plain; and, swerving for a little out of the direct road, we arrived at its base. As there were no stones or remnants of other buildings any where near, we were at a loss to know what it meant; all that our dragoman knew of its domestic history was, that Ibrahim Pasha, passing it one day, planted his guns at some distance off, and amused himself for an hour in trying their range, though he failed to do more than knock a few stones out, thereby damaging its personal appearance. Its height, as nearly as we could judge by merely looking at it, must have been seventy feet, independently of the basement.

Another hour's riding brought us to the village of Derr-el-Akma, situated at the foot of Gebel-Makmel, where we found the tents of an American party, some of them being out on an excursion up the mountains, whilst some were engaged in taking their noon-tide siesta. The latter woke up on hearing the clatter of our horses' hoofs, and invited us to refresh ourselves with some beer before seeking the heights.

Of this offer we gladly availed ourselves; but much as we felt this kindness, we could not help indulging in a good laugh at a blunder which escaped one of them during the visit. With evident difficulty he strove to keep up a conversation in *French* with the Countess, who, speaking *English* perfectly well herself, gave him every opportunity of expressing himself in his native language. As the talk went on he endeavoured to explain with what remarkable facility he acquired all foreign languages; how that French was all one to him with English; and Italian — how he rejoiced in being able to converse in that soft southern tongue, the whole grammar of which was poetry, and when spoken became a song! During a pause, he begged the Countess to partake of some oranges on the table; but on her saying that a glass of iced water would be preferable, he drew aside the tent door, and shouting to an Arab boy, who answered to the name of Mike, he bade him bring some “*Acqua calda!*” The very sound of such a beverage, with the thermometer at 100° in the shade, brought the perspiration out upon our foreheads; but when, a minute afterwards, Mike came running in enveloped in a cloud of steam, which issued from the spout of a great kitchen kettle, whose handle was so hot that the poor boy could hardly speak for winking his eyes,

we were completely overcome, and rushing out into the hot sun to procure a little shade from the kettle, we heard the American "blowing up" the boy, for a mistake which might have ended in manslaughter! The glass of iced water was at last, however, procured, and presented to the Countess, with a thousand apologies for the delay which had occurred, our host said, from never having been able to divest the word *calda* in his mind of the meaning of something *cold*.

With many thanks for their hospitality, we bade the Americans adieu, and were soon engaged in our toilsome ascent of Gebel-Makmel, in two hours reaching a well called Ain Ette. As there was no water higher up the mountain, we encamped at one P. M., having thus made a short day's journey of only seven hours, though the last two, on account of the climbing, had given our horses as much work as three times that period would have done on a level road.

Not far from the tents gushed forth from the rock a miniature cascade, which the Count and I converted into a shower bath; whilst the Countess, lower down the mountain, sat beneath the shade of a mulberry tree, and amused herself in making cigarettes for her husband. After sunset it became very cold,

so heaping together a quantity of dry wood, we made an enormous bonfire in the centre of the camp; and the lurid glare of the flames as they shot upwards, mingling with the cold white light of the moon, produced a most beautiful effect upon the dense masses of foliage which hung over us; for as the leaves waved and fluttered in the night air, sometimes catching the light of the fire, and sometimes that of the moon, they seemed to dance backwards and forwards in a joyous uncertainty as to which of the two precious metals suited their complexion the best.

After one of the coldest nights we had yet spent since leaving England, we struck the tents at sunrise, and in three hours stood on the summit of Gebel-Makmel, the loftiest of the Lebanon range, 9000 feet above the sea level, our horses up to their girths in snow. I need not say that the view on either side of us was grand in the extreme, and nothing short of the intense cold would have induced me to take so hasty a farewell as I did,—of the furthest East that I probably am ever destined to see.

We now commenced to descend, leading our horses, and hardly able to keep ourselves from slipping on the ice. Three quarters of an hour after

leaving the summit, and just below the snow line, we bent our heads as we entered the famous cedar grove. For an hour we rested in its deep shade, gazing with unspeakable admiration, akin to awe, upon those glorious trees, the relics of ages that have rolled away. Since Solomon ruled over Israel, nations have perished and others have arisen in their stead, yet still the cedars stand, thirteen in number, easily to be distinguished from the surrounding ones by their surpassing grandeur. Their huge trunks knotted, gnarled, and torn in a hundred places, even now seem well able to bear the storms of ages yet to come. Their attendant trees, if taken separately, may indeed be admired for their size and strength, yet are they very bubbles when compared with the giants near which they stand. Picking up many of the cones with which the ground was strewn, we continued our descent, a very rapid one, as far as the Maronite village of Bischerre, which we reached in two hours after leaving the cedars, and here the road began to improve. We were again in the warm Syrian climate; soft mulberry leaves and delicate vine tendrils brushed our cheeks as we rode along; and soon after passing Bischerre, the road opened upon one of the most exquisite pieces of mountain scenery

that it is possible for either poet to sing of, or artist to pourtray.

On either side of the picture before us, towered up enormous crags, which totally excluded all further view to the right or left: they seemed as if placed there on purpose to force us to centre our whole powers of admiration upon the lovely ravine, which, commencing from where we stood, wound sunnily away between their wooded sides into the far blue distance. Along its depths, though hardly audible, and looking like a wavy line of white silk, thundered the river Kadisha; whilst hanging to the white cliffs on one side, and half-hidden by the vineyards, which seemed as if bursting spontaneously from every rent and crevice in the rock, was a convent, which, glowing in the evening sun, and thus appropriately built 'twixt earth and heaven, seemed to invite to its peaceful solitudes all who were weary of this world's toils and troubles.

We thought it a very paradise, and quite coincided with the author of our chart in marking it as Eden; but whether he meant simply to pay the spot a compliment, or to assert that here our first parents dwelt, I am not able to say.

On the second day after leaving "Paradise," we reached the sea at Batroum, a few miles to the

south of Tripoli, and in the afternoon crossed over the Nar-Ibrâhîm, or Adonis river, a stream of some breadth and excessive depth, and which is said to flow blood on every anniversary of the death of Venus's beloved ; but as the particular day on which he succumbed to the boar's tusks was not specified in Messrs. Hannay and Dietrichsen's Almanac, which my friend carried in his portmanteau, we hardly thought it worth while to encamp on its banks for the chance of its soon becoming due.

For the last time we pitched our tents and arranged our snug little encampment. The spot was a beautiful one ; but this aggravated us, as it led us more than ever to regret that, after this evening, we were to go on with the old story of houses and climbing up stairs to bed with chamber candlesticks. Mohammad's savoury mess of macaroni and stewed pigeons had been disposed of almost in silence ; thoughts of the morrow had diminished the violence of those appetites which were the result of our free, roving life. Sitting in our tent door, as did Abraham of old, we looked out over the Mediterranean, lying motionless as a sheet of molten gold in the sunset. Our pipes and coffee were handed in silence from the cook's tent ; our servants felt for us : was not the period of their service drawing also to a

close? Till a late hour we sat watching the Latakia sparkling in our pipe-bowls, and talking over our tent-life; nor was it until the moon, which was on the wane, shone whitely across the oily calm, that we gathered together for the last time the folds of our tent door.

CHAP. XXXI.

FAREWELL TO THE EAST.

A RESIDENCE at Beyrouth of little more than twenty-four hours only justifies me in offering those few words of praise which even the steward of the steamer that drops her anchor in its bay, whilst taking in passengers for Egypt, is obliged to confess are the due of its beautiful situation upon the lowest slopes of the Lebanon, surrounded with its flowering forests of rhododendrons and oleanders, and smiling from one end to the other with the many verandahed villas of its Frank residents. At sunset on the day after my arrival, I bade adieu to all my travelling companions, and was soon after steaming out to sea, on my way back to Alexandria, in the French boat Eurotas. When I retired to my cabin the Mediterranean was quiet and calm as a lake, but towards morning the wind got up, and by the time we reached Jaffa at noon, the sea was running so high that we had the greatest difficulty in disembarking and receiving passengers. All that

day and the next we were at sea, and on the third morning after leaving Beyrouth we anchored, at eleven A. M., beneath our quarantine flag in the port of Alexandria.

Again was I obliged to deliver myself up for five days' imprisonment, under the suspicion of having got the plague in my pocket; and on being liberated, astonished myself by existing for an entire fortnight in Egypt in quite a pleasant manner, notwithstanding the hot kampseen wind, which blew nearly all the time from the Desert, and which, bad as it is in the winter, amounts to a positive and dreadful infliction in the summer.

From Alexandria to Aboukir Bay it is a distance by land of about fourteen miles; so, hiring a couple of extra good donkeys, I started one evening after sunset, in company with a friend, arriving in an hour and a half at Ramlêh, a spot in the Desert sacred to the memory of the gallant Abercromby.

In earnest of the endeavours of a few energetic Alexandrians to found here a sort of town without shops, whither they might retire in the cool of the summer evenings after the fatigues of business, the shells of one or two houses have been hastily erected, and which, as we approached them noiselessly over the soft sand, in the gathering darkness,

stared at us with their great four-cornered eyes in a most ghostly and churchyard-like fashion.

Mastering the melancholy sensations which we felt creeping over us, as we listened to the night-winds whistling through and slamming the doors of their yet untenanted rooms, we selected the best, and cheerfully dubbed it ours for the night. Collecting some dry wood, we made a little fire on the door-step, over which we boiled our kettle; and then producing some tea and its usual accompaniments of sugar, butter, and bread, and a bottle of cognac from a basket we had carried with us, we soon made ourselves very jolly. Starting the next morning at daybreak, we trotted our donkeys over the Desert to Aboukir, where we arrived about nine o'clock. The heat of the day, which was something terrific, we spent in the house of a most curious specimen of humanity, an Italian, long since naturalised as a Frenchman, and who here fulfils all the necessary functions of a coast-guard, quarantine, and custom-house officer. He privately informed me that he had served both in the army and the navy, but prided himself upon his superior knowledge of the latter. His only companion was a young lad, over whose education he had presided himself, and whose principal accomplishment appeared to be that of

bowing, at the same time pulling his forelock of hair and blushing, whenever we made the slightest movement. Out of charity to the poor boy, I sat for a long time very quietly, hoping that he would forget what were evidently the special injunctions of the old man whenever a visitor was present; but so sure as I attempted either to blow my nose or look at my watch, he began to bow and blush, as if some string inside his coat had been pulled in connection with these two operations.

Seldom seeing an European, the old Frenchman was in an ecstasy at our arrival; and when we opened the basket in which we had brought our lunch, he hardly knew how to express the intensity of his gratification: even the boy left off bowing, and looked at the veal-pie as if he understood that better than all the salutations in the world. Whilst we emptied the basket, he cleared the table of sundry signal flags and bits of rope; and producing from a cupboard a bottle of home-made Bordeaux which he classed as “superbe!” to our infinite horror, he placed it on the table, with the declaration, that in *his* house we should drink *his* wine and hang the expense! As for our own sherry, he put that carefully on one side for us to take back with us; but by this show of hospitality the old gentleman

was a gainer to a most alarming extent, on the principle that we should not be likely to carry coals to Newcastle.

The meal concluded, he took us on to the roof of his house, whence we had a complete view of all the spots connected with the battle—the island at which Nelson dividing his line, came down in two columns upon the entire French fleet anchored in shore; also the spot where, three years later, we landed under Abercromby.

In describing the naval engagement, he lauded the English up to the skies; but I suspect this was a slight attention in return for our sherry, as it is well known in Alexandria, that whenever he entertains a party of Frenchmen, he proves beyond a doubt that the English got the worst of it — a fact which he regrets remains only in his possession.

Returning home in the afternoon, we rode all the way to Ramlêh in the track of the retreating French squadrons, though how different now the scene in the quiet solitude of the Desert sunset!

A few days before I left Egypt, I was aroused one morning out of my sleep by the firing of so many guns, that I began to fear that I had been spirited back during the night to the days of Nelson and the battle of the Nile. However, on descending to

breakfast, I found that it was the proclamation to the Moslem world, from all the forts in and about Alexandria, of the commencement of the great fast of Ramadân. By all sincere Mussulmen this fast, which lasts for one Arab month, is observed most rigidly. It prohibits them, between the hours of sunrise and sunset, from either eating, drinking, or even smoking. Severe as are these regulations when the fast falls during the winter months, it is infinitely more so when it occurs, as it did this year, during the hot weather.

Those men who are rich enough to eat all night, as they are allowed, and to go to sleep during the day, are not so much to be pitied; but upon the labouring classes, who are obliged to earn their nocturnal meals by working during the hot air of noon, one does not know how to bestow a sufficient amount of respect. The manner in which they thus acutely pay the penalty of adherence to the Mussulman creed is truly wonderful: towards sunset all the donkey-boys and grooms in attendance upon carriages may be seen, each with his little wallet containing provisions slung across his back, watching, with countenances expressive of the most intense expectation, the sun as it sinks towards the horizon: for an instant only after its disappearance there is a

pause, during which the whole machinery of the city seems to hang, and all eyes are turned towards the principal fort. The donkey-boys, who are a shade more careless about religious matters, are generally hard at it by this time, and are going away at a pace a great deal too severe to last; but not so the more advanced Mussulman: he waits till, in another second, the great gun from the fort proclaims that the sun has set, and that till it rises on the morrow there is a truce to fasting; and then he too spreads his wallet on the ground wherever he may be, and whilst he makes his coffee, he puffs away furiously at his much-loved pipe; unlike the donkey-boy, he commences to eat deliberately, though with doubtless as much relish, in this manner prolonging the pleasure.

During the Ramadân, the law against walking about the town, three hours after sunset, without a lantern is done away with; so, able to dispense with my fanoose-bearer, I walked down one night into the Arab quarters of the town, where I came upon such a scene of riot and confusion, as would be almost inconceivable to any one who had not been out of Europe. The shops which had been closed during the day were now all open, and brilliant, with every imaginable device for showing a light, from a cotton-wick to a blazing pine torch. Across every street

was arranged a sort of cat's-cradle of red, blue, and yellow paper lamps, whilst beneath was enacting such a masquerade, as is seldom equalled even at Vauxhall on the night of the Derby stakes. So densely crowded with men in every variety of costume, and of every grade of ferocity and rascality, that having found myself almost by some supernatural agency in the centre of them all, I quite gave up all hope of getting out again before morning. Here a little space had been cleared for some dancing girls, who were delighting the surrounding feasters and smokers with the graceful movements of their supple figures; there some boys were striving almost in vain to raise their voices in singing above the din of the crowd. Puppet-shows in great variety were exciting bursts of laughter from all who were not watching the dancing-girls, or listening to the singing boys. Impossible as it seemed, I at last squeezed my way back to the Frank quarter, where the darkness was so great, in contrast to the light I had just left, that without my accustomed lantern-bearer I had some little difficulty in finding my way home and eventually to bed.

Shortly after this, walking through the square, I read an announcement to the effect that on the next evening no less than three steamers were to sail for

Europe—viz., The Peninsular and Oriental Company's screw Bengal to England, by way of Malta and Gibraltar; the French M. N. Alexandre to Marseilles, by way of Genoa; and the Austrian Lloyd's Calcutta to Trieste, by way of Corfu. I thus had three modes of returning home at my disposal; and, after a few moments' consideration, having chosen the last, I packed up my portmanteau the next morning, and during the afternoon pulled off to the Calcutta, which had been advertised to sail the first of the three—at 5 p. m., precisely,—but, owing to some unaccountable delay, we were the last to leave our moorings. First, the French boat moved slowly out to sea, her crew waving their hats and shouting, “pour la belle France!” then the huge Bengal steamed majestically past us, with three cheers for Old England, the last strains of “Rule Britannia” floating back on the sunset breeze, as she followed in the wake of the Alexandre; and, last of all, we came round head to sea. And when, as leaving the land of Egypt, I had watched, long after dark, the lights of Alexandria glimmer for the last time in the seemingly fast receding South, I felt that now in truth I had done with the East.

CHAP. XXXII.

IN CONCLUSION.

THE sensations of delight which I experienced on landing at Trieste, and once more setting foot on stone pavement, loitering about the small marble tables of caf s, listening to the rattle of carriages, and mixing in all the bustle and activity attendant upon European life, after having been so long away in the indolent East, were sweeter than I had anticipated. So complete a Turk had I insensibly become, that, on meeting a couple of *unveiled* maid-servants walking at large along one of the galleries of the Hotel de la Ville, in which I had taken apartments, I felt all my notions of morality and what was correct to be outraged; but before I could remonstrate with them upon the impropriety of their conduct, they were gone; and retiring to my room, I called to mind, as I unpacked my trunk, the fact of my being no longer in the atmosphere of the hareem, where women are but exceedingly large babies, as

incapable of making a bed as of commanding a squadron of cavalry. In the early morning I went to Venice.

Pausing at noon among the shipping, the tracery work of whose lofty spars and rigging lay reflected upon the mirror-like surface of the broad lagoon, our luggage was submitted to the scrutiny of the Austrian douaniers, and then we landed. A gondola carried me and mine from the steamer to the Riva del Schiavoni; and as I glided past the Piazza San Marco and the palace of the Doges, I learned to appreciate a small portion of her charms,—the bride of that blue sea which, lover-like, embraces and kisses her on every side.

For a week I stopped at Venice quite alone; nor did I seem to want other companionship than that of my own thoughts. Here at last I had come to a city possessed of all those romantic characteristics with which it had ever been my delight years ago to clothe all continental places,—broad piazzas, long vistas of columned arcades, immense cathedral churches, so lofty, that windows piled on windows up their walls failed to illuminate the mysterious gloom which hung about the rafters in their roofs, side aisles adorned with great pictures by Titian or Tintoretto, the blackened canvass tinted with a

stream of sunshine through some stain-glass window, marble palaces, domes, and bell-towers—all these, and much more than I have time or space to tell of, I found at Venice.

Stepping into my gondola, I entered the Canalazzo. Leaning back on my cushioned seat, with one leg thrown carelessly on those little side stools of black leather, I gave myself up to the sweet *niente* of the moment, and listened to my *domestique de place* (a very shabby individual, who wore an equally shabby hat, and would persist in carrying an old cotton umbrella beneath a cloudless sky), as I swept silently along. “Here Lord Byron lived: there opposite the palace of the Foscari: further on that of the Pisani:” and thus on I went, palaces without number, now here, now there, my head ever turning as the ceaseless tongue of my guide showered down upon me perfect bouquets of noble names. Presently I came in sight of the famous Rialto, and the windows of my gondola were darkened as I passed beneath it; and thus gliding gently on, ever passing between rows of lofty palaces, I emerged at last upon the open sea on the other side of Venice. And here was a curious sight,—the railroad, the sole connecting link between the “glorious city in the sea” and the mainland. Even as I lingered, gazing back

on what I had left, the morning train came moving quietly from among the domes and spires of the city. So I watched it as, increasing in speed, it ran swiftly across the waters on its way to Padua—strange contrast between the present and the past!

Before I returned to Trieste, I went early one morning in the train across the sea to the mainland, and spent the rest of that day and the night in Verona. This excursion was made simply for the sake of seeing the old Roman amphitheatre, which I had heard was still in an almost perfect state, and also for a stroll about the city, where once dwelt Juliet and her Romeo; and not only did I accomplish both these wishes, but engaging the services of an idling Veronese, he piloted me through a number of narrow streets to the Capulet mansion itself, now a very third-rate hostelry, and where, over the massive gateway, he pointed out, that I might have no grounds for being sceptical, the family arms and motto, deeply engraved in the stone-work. In the evening I walked out of the town to some beautiful gardens attached to the Palazzo Giusti. As I went I met a great crowd following a cart guarded by a detachment of soldiers, and containing a man in irons. On inquiring who he might be, and whither he was going, I was told, "He is a

murderer, and he is going to be shot without the city walls." Another quarter of an hour, and I was wandering among the flowers and fountains of the Giusti gardens, fearfully contrasting my own lot with that of the wretched man whom I had met but a few minutes ago, and who was perhaps now kneeling to receive the bullets of his executioners.

Leaving Verona at sunrise, I breakfasted at Padua. The white mist which had lain upon the ground during the night was now melting away in the increasing warmth of the sun, hanging as it floated gently upwards among the domes and campaniles of the city. All the belfries of the university were ringing out, as it seemed to me, a merry welcome to some one, though, as the good citizens of Padua could hardly be aware of my approach, I did not presume to arrogate it to myself.

A few hundred yards from the university, whose halls and quadrangles, swarming with pale-faced students, dressed in long black hair, spectacles, and meerschaums, fail to excite even a romantic fancy for matriculating at Padua, stands the Palazzo Ragione, its magnificence centred in one immense hall, at one end of which stands Donatello's colossal horse, of such proportions that, when, years ago, on certain festive occasions, it was paraded through the

streets of Padua adorned with flowers, forty persons used to sit, on a level with the house-tops, upon its great broad back. Those times have now passed away, but still the great horse exists ; and whoever takes the trouble, on a moonlight night, to peep in at the windows of the Palazzo Ragione, may there discern, in the mysterious gloom of the great hall, Donatello's giant horse, the fore leg raised in the act of trotting, carved so nearly to the life, that it is almost a marvel that it has not long ago taken offence at the neglect with which it is treated, and trotted off to feed among the pine forests of the Alps.

In the evening I returned to Venice. The Piazza of St. Mark, brilliantly illuminated, threw the blazing result of a thousand lamps upon the lagoon as I pushed off at midnight to the steamer ; and at six o'clock the next morning, I again stepped on to the quai in front of the Hotel de la Ville, at Trieste. That same afternoon I bade a final adieu to the shores of the Mediterranean, about which I had been lingering so long, and climbing up into the impériale of a diligence, I started for Adelsberg.

The sun shone out brightly at first, but soon after getting clear of the town the sky clouded over, and the rain came down in torrents. In no very cheerful state of mind we arrived presently at the custom-

house, where all travellers and merchandise, either entering or leaving Trieste, are examined most rigidly. In the course of my peregrinations, I have met with a very fair amount of annoyance, even approaching to incivility, at the hands of that much-to-be detested class "*les douaniers* ;" but I now look back upon it all as the most perfect *obsequiousness* compared with the actual *bullying* which I here experienced. Not only did these tyrants not content themselves with inserting their great hands into every corner of my valise, but raising it aloft, they turned it topsy-turvy, and savagely thumped the bottom. In a moment the counter was strewn with all those minor articles of dress, over which, up to the present time, I had fondly fancied that no one, save the *blanchisseuse* and their owner, would ever exercise the least authority. Prints, bracelets, boots, hair-brushes, studs, and goodness knows how many other things, but a few minutes since nicely packed away, were now being "*made hay of*" on the counter. In vain I expostulated, and coloured with indignation, as I ran after my sponge-bag, which, having fallen on to the floor, was rolling fast out among the dirty boots of the other passengers into the road: in vain I pretended sometimes to enter into the joke, forcing a ghastly smile as one of them asked how much I had given

for a head-dress, intended for my sister. I had to wait patiently till, having satisfied themselves that there was nothing very particular there, they bid me help them to shove the things in again as quickly as possible, lest the diligence should go off without me.

At midnight we stopped, and struggling up out of the collar of my great coat, I asked the name of the place: "Adelsberg! est ce qu'il y a un passager pour Adelsberg?" said the conducteur: "Oui, oui, c'est moi," said I, and down I tumbled half asleep from the impériale on to the ground. Almost before I knew exactly what I was about, I had paid the driver his usual fee, my portmanteau and hat-box had been handed down, and the diligence began to move on. Running after it, I shouted out, to know where the hotel was — "C'est là, Monsieur, là-bas;" shouted back the conducteur, pointing, I could not see where; and in another minute the huge vehicle was rumbling away in the distance. So dark that I could not even see the houses with which I knew I was surrounded, raining hard, and with not a notion as to where the hotel was, I began to feel quite unhappy. Not a sound came to break the stillness of the night, save the plashing of the rain, as it fell heavily from the house-tops. There was

not a human being stirring, nor could I catch the faintest glimmer of any lamp or fire in any of the houses. To make matters worse, for the life of me I could not find my luggage, which I remembered to have seen handed down to me, but which I had deserted in my anxiety to know from the conducteur the whereabouts of the hotel.

However, at length stumbling against it, I lugged it on to the pavement, and then, feeling my way along against the dripping houses, I presently came to a door, which to my astonishment was wide open. Hoping that it was the hotel, I entered, and hauling my luggage after me, making as much noise as possible, I found myself in what seemed to be a large stone hall. Letting go my portmanteau, I groped about, shouting at intervals for the garçon, till at last I found the staircase, which I ascended to the first floor. Almost in despair of ever being comfortable again in my whole life, I determined to enter the first room I came to, and take possession of any bed, whether occupied or not. But in this I failed, for every door that I tried was locked, so as a last resource I set to and beat an alarm upon all the doors I could find. After allowing a few moments to elapse, I fancied, in the dead silence which succeeded to the noise I had been making,

that I could hear the striking of a lucifer-match, and a moment after a foot overhead told me that I had been heard. Presently down the stairs, from some garret in the roof, came creeping an old woman, with little else on than a night-gown, holding a candle above her head. Stammering out what little Italian I was master of, I told her I wanted something to eat, and a bedroom: shaking her head, she answered me in German, which was a language so wholly and entirely beyond me, that I was obliged to have recourse to a series of pantomimes, laying my hand to my cheek and shutting my eyes to testify a wish to sleep, and munching my tongue as a sign of hunger. Almost asleep as she was, she took my meaning directly, and in quite a motherly way, relieving me of the wet rugs in which I was still wrapped, led the way to a room, where, after making signs that there was nothing eatable to be had, she left me, only too thankful to obtain what a few moments since had seemed very doubtful—viz. a night's lodging.

As my stopping at Adelsberg was solely for the sake of seeing the celebrated caverns, I was not a little pleased, on waking the next morning, to find the sun shining brilliantly. The grottoes are distant from the village about a mile; so immediately after

breakfast, obtaining a guide, I set out for the mountain beneath which they extend.

After waiting for a quarter of an hour at the entrance, whilst some men went in to illuminate them, I commenced exploring. Leaving daylight for awhile, I followed my guide down a long gallery cut in the rock, regretting that I had not brought an umbrella with me, on account of the heavy drops of water which fell incessantly upon my head, and at times found their way down my back. When we arrived at the extreme limit of the entrance tunnel, we turned on the right up a few steps, and following the guide's torch, I presently found myself standing on a small platform, overlooking a scene upon which I had come so suddenly, that for a few moments I was quite bewildered. I seemed to be clinging like a fly midway up the wall of a vast domed hall: high up above me hung down gigantic stalactites, reflecting in all manner of colours the numerous lights, which, artistically dispersed among them, produced an effect quite indescribable. Far away down below I could see the river Poik, which having found its way into the mountain, seemed to be struggling to get out again as fast as possible, every now and then pausing as if to take breath before it renewed the contest in a deep and placid

pool, whose surface was crimsoned with the reflection of the coloured stalactites above. In the distance was a small bridge, lighted on either side by rows of candles, which twinkled hazily like real lamps afar off on a foggy night, and below which the Poik went tumbling down among the rocks into the darkness beyond. Descending a long flight of stone steps, and climbing down many ladders, I at length reached the brink of the river, and, walking along its banks, crossed over the bridge between the miniature lamp-rows. After a while, leaving the river, I passed along passages and entered other caverns, which, though they were not so large as the first, were still very wonderful. In many of them the stalactites from above, uniting with the stalagmites from below, enabled me to walk down long avenues of such columns as would have graced a cathedral. The last cavern of all, called by the guides "Mount Calvary," pleased me the most, for not only are there here stalactites and stalagmites without number, but, heaped about in grand confusion, and assuming the most fantastic forms, are huge masses of coloured rock, which tower up into the darkness above, shaping themselves at times into peaks, at times into great boulders of crimson and emerald green.

After leaving the caverns I returned to the hotel, and was picked up by the diligence from Trieste in the same doubtful manner, whilst every one in Adelsberg was asleep, as on the preceding night I had been put down.

Unwilling longer to detain my reader over a description of scenes this side the Mediterranean, and which, as I remarked in some of the earliest pages, ought to be farthest from the mind of any one sitting down to write a book about the East, I close my volume, at the same time assuring my reader, that though he may have seen me last on the top of a diligence at Adelsberg, I have since then ridden in an omnibus along Oxford Street.

THE END.

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